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# *DEATH AND RENEWAL*



# Death and Renewal

*By*

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*Translated from the Swedish by*

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## **PART I**

# **DISINTEGRATION AND MECHANISATION**



## THE CURRENTS OF THE DEPTHS AND THE GLITTER OF THE SURFACE

IN the depths of the sea there flow hot and cold currents. The sailor does not mark them, save incidentally, at the changes of the winds. But it depends on these streams whether the shores are to remain icy deserts or become verdant with life.

Even where Arctic shores drop sheer from dismal mountain ranges you may come upon dense woods and giant flowering plants. And when, on your wanderings from the glacier-burdened heights, you reach a littoral with undulating fields and fertile pastures, and hear the cattle lowing from the farms, you ask in amazement: "How did I reach these fair regions of life?"

In the depths of the sea of life . . .

While you have been tossing about in quest of your work and your life's companions, it must have happened, sometimes, that you have plunged helplessly from the radiant height of self-consciousness into a slough of despondency. One moment the world lay sunny before you, and the next moment it had changed into a prison yard, where you agonised among the multitude of wrecked human lives.

Wonderingly you looked about you, asking, "What has happened?" Perhaps you turned angrily on your friend, putting the blame on him; or you trampled on someone who chanced in your way; or you cursed your fate. But neither anger nor curses can ever give clearness of insight to the bewildered mind; nor answer him who questions. They do but make the darkness doubly dark.

Do you not understand? Hidden death has been lying in wait for you. Like a child, you were playing on the edge of the abyss. Suddenly an icy wave surged up from the depths, submerging the flower-gardens of the heart. Oh, be on your guard, lest you make the innocent suffer for that cold, for which none is to blame!—only the streams that carry the ice of the mountains to the sea, making its currents cold.

And when, in the grip of congealing anguish, you felt yourself suddenly set free, and saw life take on colour; when, in new-kindled love, you reached out towards heaven and earth, and wanted to press all mankind to your heart, exclaiming, "It is mine—all the world is mine—all that is and all that has been lives in me": perhaps you then ascribed this change to your friend's caress, or to your success, or to the vista opening up at the turn of the road, or to the glass you had emptied. Or did the warming currents of the depths break over you during sleep? Did you awake with tears of emotion, a dream-picture in your mind, and at a loss whither to bestow thanks for your new happiness?

What you experienced was the victory that lies in the defeat of death and the wonder of renewal. The forces of life may have been struggling in the unseen for a decade before they succeeded in taking control and sending you this dream-picture as a message. Perhaps they will have to struggle for another decade before you awake some morning to find that death has loosed its grip, and you can cry, exultant, "It is achieved!"

Oh, the uncertainty that hovers over all our days and nights! We fulfil our duties, and believe that we are following the path of life, while we are merely following that of virtue. But deep within us the unreleased desires accumulate; and conflicts which have failed to fight their way to harmony sink down into the darkness, drawn by their own weight. Under

the sway of uncertainty dangers grow while we do not see them.

Could we reach certitude by shattering the mystery from which life grows as the flower grows from the earth, and which makes death a darkness beyond all darkenesses—could we and did we do this—then we should feel the noose tighten around our necks, and chaos would open wide where uncertainty had lurked.

Woe unto those fools who ponder about “the life to come” and all conceivable inaccessible things! “The life to come!” Even if they could illumine the uttermost darkness, they would not be able to fill new spheres with the spirit of redemption—they that were not even able to invest the earth with so much of value that they might calmly say to themselves and to others: “It is here that I want to be, here and nowhere else, here with all my might as long as it is given me!” They would but hunt through space in newly acquired restlessness, always clamouring for “the life to come.”

If you can secure a perfect hold on the struggle between life and death in its earthly form every night will be a bath of renewal, and every day that dawns will spread before you as endless as life seemed endless to your childhood. Through a thousand deaths you will wander towards the heights of a thousand lives.

And when the grip of death at last forces the heart to stop, when your body grows cold and earthly shores merge with the ocean into awful infinities, you will whisper to her who holds your hand: “No death can be deeper and more difficult to bear than the death out of which your love regenerated me.” And if your last hour finds you alone, do not forget that every warming wave in a loving heart is but a wave mounting from the great depths over which we all glide on—in solitude.

If you have won eternity in its earthly form, it will follow you through crumbling worlds and kindle light in your soul, whatever shadows darken around you. But if you think to gain eternity more easily through death than through life, then you are like the fool who believes that roses thrive better in frozen soil than in soil that is warmed by springs from the depths and the sun's blessed bounty.

## A GUIDE

Do not think that I shall lead you to a sunny shore where a golden bark lies waiting amid the sporting dolphins, there to say alluringly: "There! In a day's voyaging this will take you to a place where you can see the land of salvation emerge in the distance from the morning mist." The time of romance is gone for ever. We have been ruthlessly tried in the purgatory of disappointments, and we must for ever ruthlessly test everything that falls into our hands.

To us who had a share in the experience of the world catastrophe, the death of millions, the death of civilisation, the death of the god of mercy, nothing was left but faith in the one thing—in Death. This book gravitates to the war as to an inescapable centre of gravity; for the war revealed the death towards which time had sped onwards for centuries and millennia. Read "The Catastrophe." The war rang like a call of warning through our souls and gave us sight—we saw the death to which we ourselves were subject—and we were seized with that longing for salvation which you will find expressed in "A Morning in the Rose-garden."

We can yearn and long; we can defy Death—we are not wholly and for ever in his power. There are renewing forces also. They may not lift us victorious to the heights of reality, but at least they make our existence possible. The thinkers who led us in this direction and in that did but lead us astray. The problem of orientation is the problem of adjusting ourselves to the constant alternation of death and renewal. The problem of adaptation is the problem of fulfilling ourselves in terms of the rhythm that pulses through the world. If you want to catch a glimpse of the goal of your pilgrimage in the far distance, then read "My Thought of Thoughts." And if



you want to reach that goal, travel on patiently, step by step, mile by mile.

To know the paths of death and the mystery of death is the first and the most important thing before us. Unless your sense of perception has been whetted to the understanding of these things you will know nothing of those you meet on your path, and you will be unable to discriminate between those who can help you on and those who will hamper you on your onward way. I call the first section of this book "Disintegration and Mechanisation," these being the names of the roads of death. Watch carefully all you meet, lest you be seduced by those who claim that they hold the fullness of salvation while they hold nothing but the dead bones of the past.

In calling the second part of this book "Sacrifice and Atonement" I revert to the oldest of all traditions, which is also the tradition that will survive longest. When men kindled a fire of purification on a hill-top, calling the place where the fire burnt an altar, they were moved by the agony of their longing to escape the grip of death and to feel themselves lifted up by the spirit of renewal. When no altar remains on the earth, no hope will remain that the earth will become a home for mankind.

As the workings of the forces of renewal may be thwarted in the individual by errors and false valuations, so also may they be thwarted in the mass of humanity. It was derangements of this kind, with accompanying disintegration and mechanisation, that led to the war.<sup>1</sup> Checks and rebuffs may be dealt with successfully only by a radical process of revaluation that eliminates errors.<sup>2</sup> An accord may be achieved between the

<sup>1</sup> This, with other ideas, is further developed in the section, "Communion and the Community".

<sup>2</sup> I have dealt with this matter in the chapters "Conquering Feeling," "Conquering Reason," "Conquering Will," and "Conquering Compulsion."

individual who has thus been changed and the mass that has also been changed: holiness may be born anew.

But this revaluating process has a far deeper significance.

Death is our companion not only during our journeyings on earth. As certainly as it visits our hearts every day, death awaits us at the end of the journey. Our efforts at orientation should not be confined to time and space; we should aspire to adapt ourselves to eternity and the infinite. Men knew this when they named the word God. But their knowledge did not avail them. By a process of revaluation we may achieve harmony between the rhythm of death and renewal in its human relations and in its cosmic relations. It is not true that God lives, nor that God is dead. It is true only that God dies and that God is renewed.<sup>1</sup>

When you have attained thus far you will see the thought of thoughts hover before you, and only then will you be able to grasp its scope to the full. The abyss that has opened in the consciousness of the time between that which *claims* our belief and that which *holds* our belief is bound to give rise to a spiritual earthquake that overturns all things, leaving no value unaffected. Symbolism and clair-obscure are the instruments by means of which my thought tries to reach the unreachable; and you will see that I shall have to take these instruments into my hands again and again.

I have to say this to you: Unless this book becomes a path to the regeneration of holiness it will be of no use, not even for reading in idle hours; for there is nothing of more concern in this terrible age of ours. The concept of holiness is more essential than the concept of God, being more human. All I have to say is embodied in the chapters on "The Demands of

<sup>1</sup> See "The Life-Mass and the Death-Mass."

Holiness" and in "Holiness Grows," where you will find both my confession and my hope.

Do not take offence at this preliminary signpost. The forest of thoughts is dense, and it is easy to stray when walking the paths of the wilderness. And, being a searching spirit, you have to proceed alone. Should you ever meet me on your way, greet me with anything but a remark that you share my views; you would only disturb my solitude. And worse: you would make me feel that I had unduly interfered with your search for yourself. But if you can tell me that, journeying thus, you have become more conscious of your own path, and have achieved a lucidity all your own, you will make me happy.

## MEPHISTO'S LAUGH AND THE HAPPINESS OF THE AWAKENING

WHEN watching life your eye discovers danger, and the perception of danger gives you power to avoid it. The capacity to direct your eyes forward or backward, to weigh, calculate, and plumb with your reason everything that happens, increases your power and extends its range. But when you shut your eyes and go to sleep you are transferred to a sphere where no fixed purpose exists, nor reason, nor power. What are dreams but bubbles that rise to the surface from the slough of the past, to burst and to distress you with their odour? Is not all talk of freedom futile and delusive, considering that a third of our life is passed in the unconscious state?

The various motives of life contend for supremacy. The weaker motives recede, and those that have served their time go to the bottom. Undesirable motives are ruled out and compelled by the moral forces immanent in life to disappear in the dark, or, still better, in inaccessibility. Thus is life shaped out.

Many have taken refuge in the desert, hoping to slake the fire of passion in its cool impassivity, and many have walked the desolate streets all night, fearing the return to the lonely chamber. But in vain. All that has been gained by arduous efforts and struggle, through years of pain and sacrifice, may be shattered in a moment. A tempting dream-image may sweep aside all our intentions. The unconscious is the home of the negation of life, and it echoes for ever with Mephisto's laugh.

Do not believe that the tempter is defeated because you have succeeded in controlling all the disturbing visions and subduing the throb of your pulse so completely that you are proof against assault even in the stillest hours of night. The

peace of death is always dangerous. And perhaps you will find that the freedom you have won through your deadly grip on yourself is a worse evil than the power from which you sought to escape.

To-day a self-imposed habit is practised with sweat and toil; to-morrow it works of itself, and the day after to-morrow it can no longer be controlled. The same is the case with negation. If negation is made the first and last motive of life, it remains active in the unseen. Whatever stirs below and presses upward suddenly sinks under its weight. The compelling power with which passions come sweeping down upon us now breaks forth triumphant where you had dug the river-bed of negation. And as passion overflowed into fields it was not supposed to reach, so, too, negation will overflow, carrying with it the very trees and flowers you sought to protect.

And more: we belong to the past and to that which lives around us. We are not only the victims of our own valuations and our own negative restraints; we are also the victims of those of mankind. Many ideals have loomed before it during its journey, and it has sent the spirit of negation to sweep clean the path, so that it may reach that which looms in the distance. Not a day passes but the rapid stream of negation in the unconscious sucks something loved and cherished down into its cold depths.

When the ardour of life expires, while the power of will to control life increases; when something that lived and delighted your eyes suddenly fades and becomes commonplace, like a thousand other things, without lustre, rhythm, and value; when the one you love changes before your very eyes into a stranger and you return her caress with a rebuff; when you are pressed down by an imaginary burden of guilt, and, like all gloomy ponderers before you, pile up learned evidence proving the futility of all things . . .

*Then Mephisto laughs.*—Alas for the poor wretch whose soul is always echoing with his laughter! It does not help him if he reach the heights of happiness. What to-day is joy that warms him, he disavows to-morrow, and instead of warmth it radiates cold. It is of no avail though he attain the uttermost beauty of achievement. To-morrow he will ask: My work, what is it? Mere words. Nor does it profit him if he reach perfection of power. To-morrow Mephisto will be still more powerful and will whisper: "Do you not hear the jingling of the bells? You thought it was an emperor's crown; it was nothing but a fool's cap!"

But the currents of the depths are not only cold. . . .

Warm currents, too, are moving in the unconscious. They do not come only from the sunny heights, where on some rare occasions you were allowed to repose with a feeling that everything was well. They come also from those powers of renewal in humanity which from time to time burst forth in the pilgrims of holiness and were passed on for the benefit and blessing of new generations.

A miracle occurs whenever the day releases its grip on our souls, leaving everything to be resolved and available to the forces of creation and to the warm currents of the depths. He who enters the world of dreams is like a poet who closes the door behind him to surrender himself utterly to visions that bear the impress of his soul. And the happiness which he experiences on awaking is the happiness of a creator of new values.

"Grant me a sign, O Lord, that Thou art and that Thou dost encompass my soul with Thy grace!" So men have ever cried in anguish of their distress. And in so doing they did not know that the grace of renewal visited their souls each night, raising them up for the achievement of new works.

## THE ECSTATIC

WE are erring creatures, and the world is not a home. We question and struggle and reach out for something beyond question and struggle. We want to see; we want to dream; we want to storm the firmament, and from the cup of lust we want to drain the earthly draught of felicity. We want to be masters; and in boundless trust we want to deliver ourselves to higher wills that in them we may be freed from volition. Life forces itself upon us with a thousand motives. There are learned men who know the cogs of the world-machinery, and there are strong hands that revolve the wheels of the social mechanism. But where are those who are alive with all that lives and who can guide us—home?

Do not look for them among those who stand in the streets and the market-places proclaiming the same truths with the same gestures century after century. Let them remain there—an entertainment to the foolish and an example to him whose one desire is to be left standing where he stood before. Seek your leaders instead among those who reach for the eternal as given not in the immutable form of fame, but in the fleeting moments of ecstasy. Fettered more closely to the nature of things, the ecstatic must in all times suffer the agony of death more intensely and rise higher in the spheres of renewal than others.

You denied your body, practising the abomination of ascetism until nothing was left of it but a piece of bloody flesh. There is no poison whose efficacy to daze and intoxicate you did not test; restlessly you rushed from one working-day into the next as though you feared the peaceful joy of the moment as the most dangerous of all tempters. Not because of a desire to die, and still less because of ambition. No; but

because of an over-brimming lust for life and a desire for the one thing essential. You sacrificed it all to soar for one ineffable moment in renewal, to see what no mortal had seen.

You were not moved by your own will, nor acting on your own account. You! What are you? Over-sensitive to the death of the time, you became a victim of the time, and, longing for purity greater than that of other men, you became a dumping-ground for the sins of the centuries. What felicity when you woke from the millennial sleep of the race to find that all that humanity had denied in folly, or fled in cowardice, had taken living shape in you and in your work! The dreams of the masses came true in you, and through you their hidden power of renewal passed down through new generations.

A heart is bleeding. And as the hours pass, slowly, falling like heavy drops, a whisper is heard, a whisper of anguish: "What was it that I saw for one fleeting moment? What is that lustre still shimmering over the boundlessness of growing darkness? Was it a city that I saw? Or something that rose out of the sea with shining cliffs of marble and cool shadows under leafy trees? More powerful than the will of man, pillars rose skyward in a lust for conquest, to vanish in the blue infinitude. Streaks and mighty floods of sunlight all things a-tremble in the sunny radiance.

"There rose a murmur from invisible choirs—from the sea or from the mountains or from joyful human throngs. Exalted by this sound and mounting as it mounted, I soared higher and higher. I remembered the eagles which the ancients placed on the summits of temples, that their blazing eyes might avert the terror of the thunder-clouds. In the fullness of power I mounted ever upward, and I felt that the forces of evil had suffered defeat before my temple. And yet the humility of my soul had become a germinating seed which had long been whirled about by the restless winds and had now found a place in which to rest. A prayer faltered on my lips, but the



prayer was hushed and lost in the awe of stillness—Thou Earth. . . .

“My spirit exulted: here I will dwell, and here the fairest dreams of men will be fulfilled. United, the world and I ascended from vast spaces, while beyond creative forces were at work. I was conscious of nothing but the inconceivable joy of creation. My ultimate necessity and my freedom’s fulfilment.”

But every vision in your fervent soul is bound swiftly to vanish, giving place to something else that seeks to become a fire and a guiding-star in the night. And with the fading vision you yourself fade away. The bleeding heart changes into hammering machinery. It burns and stings and smarts; and when the waves of the blood surge against the skull it is as though all hell were burning in your body. . . . But if you did not sink as deep in death as you rose high in renewal you would not have roused us to insight of the essence of being; you would not have shown us the way—home.

When at last you can no more; when, rejected and trampled underfoot, you perish alone in poverty, self-torment, drunkenness, and nameless vices—a whisper escapes your lips, the last truth about your life. This message is a greater gift to humanity than that which you shaped with your hands and with your soul in your days of power:

“There is no merciful god. But renewal is always merciful. And death is sometimes more merciful than renewal.”

## THE TWO ROADS

**BEHOLD** man on the summit of creative power. There he stands strong and surcharged with life. In the flames of his fiery longing he merges with the world into a unity of regeneration. He becomes a plastic clay in the hands of the powers; he is transmuted, and the light of transfiguration shines upon the world.

Behold him when the fire has died down, and when his strength is at an end; when once again he is impotent before his own fate and the fate of the world. Follow him on the way of the cross, from the heights into the depths, and you will find the names of the two roads of death.

Inspiration does not come from one thing or another. While it flares up the dividing-line between the spheres of the conscious and the unconscious is effaced. That which lay bound in darkness is set free and assumes a form. It trembles with sensibilities. The will asserts itself and thought becomes winged. The warming wave that rose from the currents of the depths bears on its foaming crest a vessel in which man sits with all the values he has assembled.

But the hour of fulfilment draws near. When the work is delivered a deathly chill runs through the creator's soul—as when the fruit falls and a warning of approaching frost begins to shiver through the tree. He speaks to his work as the tree speaks to the fallen fruit:

“Why did you forsake me? Life was good so long as we were together. Like a warming flood the sap of the earth ran through my body, to become fragrance and sweetness in you. All things had a meaning, and every day was a goal to which

we could aspire while we grew together, you and I. But now . . . as you fell, so my leaves must fall, and I shall die. And you—will rot.”

He who feels a thing he has created slip from his grasp, and vanish, and become something alien to himself, cannot help reaching out after it. Reason intervenes to defend what but lately was an obvious truth. And the more reason exerts itself, the more it is changed—and converted into mere criticism. And the farther criticism burrows into the work, the more it falls to pieces. Man does not attain what he desires by the instrument of reason; no, but he, too, falls to pieces.

The faith that lifted us to the certainty of ecstasy crumbles and hardens into stereotyped doctrines to which we cling like a drowning man to fragments of floating wreckage. The tension that relaxed in the supreme hour had roots that extended far beyond the limits of our own self, into spheres which closed the instant ecstasy subsided; and the void that it left is filled with mere acts of volition, striving in this direction or in that; and these, too, disintegrate, become only struggling impulses, and as the impulses stagnate, the struggle loses all meaning.

Man goes on separating, disavowing and accepting through the mass of life's disintegrated and mechanised material. Wherever he goes, there opens an abyss: on the one side the world of the conscious with the thoughts and feelings that go to the making of a relentless fate—on the other the unconscious with its fleeting dreams and desires that rise out of impenetrable darkness. The abyss widens, the tension between the poles increases, and the individual is divided into two enemies, arrayed against each other. Something stirs in the unconscious; it wants to get up, to get out; it wants to take on a form—it wants to live. But with a thousand weapons and with as many wiles the conscious stands guard to meet and destroy it.

The more our inner currents freeze into compelling forces, the more they assume the character of mechanical power. Therein lies the difference between man and nature—in the former we can trace the origin and formation of mechanical paths; in the latter these appear to have an eternal and immutable character. We are right in making man a norm; for only that which our inner being has experienced can be certain. All nature is on the plane of probability.

Disintegration and mechanisation are the names of the roads of death.

As the ecstatic, when ecstasy has vanished, reaches out for the fullness of the life he has visualised, out of the chaos in which he is tormented, so we all reach out from the disintegrated and mechanised world in which we are living towards something that lives within us and beyond the touch of death. And as he is once more exalted to a creative outlook on things, so too are we.

Integration and plasticity are the names of the roads of renewal.

When man drew the line to which all valuations should be subjected—the line between body and soul, spirit and matter—he entered upon the most dangerous of all false roads. The great line runs between death and renewal: between disintegration and mechanisation, on the one hand, and integration and plasticity, on the other.

## WHEN THE LIFE-WAVE SETTLES INTO FATE

IF you have not experienced the release from the misery of life's triviality which ecstasy affords when it comes in the rare form of vision, you will have experienced that release in some of its more common forms—in the success achieved by the triumph of will, in the exaltation of self-righteousness, in sensual intoxication, in the air of the mountain-top, or at least in the joy of the child at the sight of a new toy. And you will have seen, too, that the joy you experienced in the strongest moment of release, and in which you believed then as firmly as you believe in eternity itself, bore the seed of destruction in its core. But have you realised also that when the joy died you were gripped by the power of fate?

At a turn of the path the painter suddenly faces the landscape of his dreams as a living reality, and creative energy overtakes him. But while his work matures through observation and technical detail, the intoxication subsides. There comes a day when the painter, facing the fruit of his labours, asks himself, not without bitterness: "Is this all?" Perhaps he exclaims, in bitterness: "Life is not worth living. The sweetness which gives it value is an illusion—it vanishes as we approach it. With whatever enthusiasm you reach for it, at the end you will always stand as empty-handed as myself." If he speaks thus, he has little insight. For it is just while its rays die away that the revelation becomes a power that gives impetus to our lives. How empty life would be if it were naught but a constant rapture!

In dying, the wave of renewal fills our life with the multitude of things without which our life would be no life, but a bubble on the point of bursting. While the painter reaches out for the vision that flashed before his inner eye in the moment of

inspiration, this vision brings forth creation upon creation. It becomes a ferment in his soul that nothing can appease. It becomes a directive force that determines the endeavour of years and decades. Perhaps the power will spread in ever-widening circles; perhaps the life-wave that surged up in a happy moment in a privileged soul will become an inevitable fate for generation upon generation—to dry up, finally, into the schools' dead imitation of the master.

Can you relate this to yourself? Or you may have experienced something in the crucial moment, so far from all visions of beauty that my example has no reference to you whatsoever. Perhaps the waves of lust broke upon you with such force that your senses became as wells that could never be filled, and your body a burning thing whose flames could never be extinguished. Yet lust lent beauty and colour to everything, and it was not until it had become a naked imperative that you began to agonise in a desire to escape its hold. Was it peradventure not the imperative of love but of lust that made you assume fatherhood, thus becoming fate for others?

Or did your fate slumber in some iniquity suffered as a child? Were you cast out of the paradise of innocence by a blunder or by ill-will or by the lies of another, never again to believe good of others? And did this experience of terror call into life that pathos of righteousness that has proved your good fortune and has invariably pervaded your every action? Even though the battle may have passed over your fire, trampling your flames into smouldering firebrands and changing your faith into the dead disbelief of the disappointed brooder—others will obey the laws your struggle brought to victory as the stone obeys the law of gravitation; your laws will become fate for those who must obey.

He who through disease or some other calamity has been excluded from the spontaneous and immediate process of life, and must approach life as a problem—a powerful experience

with new heavens and a new earth and with a thousand hitherto unseen things to love—becomes a thinker. The probing and searching thought has a tremendous power to bring all things immediate under its ascendancy: it sucks all the world into the channel in which it moves. The deadly hold of intellectualism lies ever in wait. Many a thinking mind has in the end been changed into a thought-producing brain, and whole epochs have moved along the tracks of dead thought.

Are there weak souls that are so caught from the first in the fateful paths of inherited and decayed values that they will never be able to rise and come into their own, nor experience the world as their property and become fate for others? It may seem so. But there is none in whom there are no forces of renewal at work as a refining fire. Nor is there anyone who must give up the hope of once being seized by the flames of purification that will change him into the man he was born to become.

## THE IMMORTALITY OF LOVE

LOVE? What is love?

Love is our perception of the fact that renewal is at work.

You love the one through whom renewal comes into your life. When, reviewing the past, you find the moment when the first wave of renewal surged through your soul, you will say: "Then, at that very moment, love awoke." If you have experienced the miracle of renewal in connection with a particular place on earth you will for ever remain bound up with that place by a bond of love. And if renewal comes to you, you know not whence or why, you stretch out your arms to the heavens, exclaiming: "I love life." But you hate those who dam up the floods of renewal where they seek, by their own force, to press their way up into the daylight.

Love is immortal—as a force of renewal in life. But love is immortal also as the fate created by the settling life-wave; and as the death wrought by every process of mechanisation.

Not only your happiness is renewed in the great moment of renewal, but your faith also, your courage and your will. Are there any limits to the faith of awakening love? Never again will life be empty. And the earth will become an abode of joy filled with the happiness of brotherhood. Love inspires courage to defy the sordidness of life. In the abandonment of love's rapture we assume responsibility for future lives; the rapture may subside, but the new lives remain and bring their claims against us. The desire to fulfil the responsibilities we have taken upon us raises life as a whole to a higher plane—it forces us into activities we otherwise would have shrunk from;



it forces us into the sphere of moral man. What is the rapture of love compared to love as fate? And as the courage to endure fate?

To the youthful and inexperienced lovers love is a magic formula that unlocks all doors and solves all difficulties. "If we could only possess each other wholly—wholly and utterly" . . . But to the one who has tried the power of twoness to redeem and who has been purged in the suffering that attends it, life together with another is a plane on which the rhythm of death and renewal is lived more fully and completely than it could ever be lived singly. No emptiness is so terrifying as that of dead matrimony; but never has life more beauty than at times when the blighted land begins to grow verdant and to bloom.

Fortunate are those whose love has strength enough to permeate the work that follows in its wake. There is nothing more beautiful than the home that breathes the spirit of union. And labour, when undertaken, not for bread alone, but as a matter of course, will add joy and zest to the struggle of life. Twice happy are they whose love is born anew with every day out of the depths of union, and around whom new waves of life ever spread their blessing.

But those who lament at seeing fate more and more gain the upper hand of happiness, duty coming before joy, care for the home disturbing the peace of the fire-side, anxiety for the future invading the hour of rest; those that weep and despair when the intoxication passes, when the commonplace turns commonplace again, and nothing is left but the way of life: ungrateful are such, and unworthy of what has been given them. Do they not see that he who has a way has the one thing essential? What is the emptiness they complain of compared with the emptiness that would yawn about them had love never been kindled, and in vanishing given them the way?

Alas, for the poor wretches who have hardened under the grip of fate, and who exert themselves to establish death as the only real fact by incessant repetition of the same thing: "Don't you remember what you threw in my face?"—"Do you suppose I could forget your infidelity?"—"How different my life might have been had you not come in my way!"—They sow thistles instead of grain, and from faith in death they have not yet passed on to faith in renewal. No matter how empty is the cup of life it can always be filled with something; if with nothing else it can be filled with sympathy for those who have strayed from the right road like ourselves, and with the endeavour tenderly to help those who have strayed to find the way—if not from a sense of union, then from a sense of community of fate.

## FUTILE ANGER AND FRUITFUL ANGER

I ROSE in rancour, exclaiming, "Ten years of suffering in return for one day's happiness!" But on finding that it was the happiness of this day that had made suffering living and living suffering creative, I controlled my anger in humble submission. But for that day of happiness the suffering that had always been mine would have continued to consume my soul to no purpose and for no man's good.

Then I was angry with myself that with my bitterness I had dammed up the currents of the depths. Something released itself in my heart, and I perceived this truth: "Happiness is the perception of the fact that something is growing. And joy is the fruit of growth in your hand."

## EVEN BECAUSE OF . . .

WITH each renewal of life there bursts a shell around us ; and chains must be sundered that we may rise in freedom. Our existence as individuals begins with an act of fission. We have our origin in the conjunction of forces that grew as generation followed generation, and we are the new forms and the hope of those forces. To each conscious being there comes a time when he feels heredity as a block in his path, through which he must blast his way if he is to survive. Not until the generations fall asunder in his soul does he mature and become fit for life.

The fanciful world of childhood fades away. Each period of life springs from the disintegration of that which preceded it—each day from the day just past. We must tear down ourselves as well as the generations within us. What stands in the way must yield. Who can reach the heart's riches without the heart's contrition? The poor in spirit takes anxious care of that which he has ; but the rich in spirit lets it go in a desire to reach the new that will forth.

The people who in times gone by named epilepsy "the sacred malady" may have had already an inkling of the strange connection between the plunging into the unconscious abyss of dissolution and the rising into the ecstatic spheres of wholeness and holiness. In calling death a revelation they saw hovering, perhaps, before their scanning eyes something still stranger. Perhaps they asked themselves: "Is even our falling asunder into the fundamental elements of our existence nothing but a step on the way of life?"

What holds good of disintegration holds good of mechanisation also. Not only in spite of it, but *even because of it*, we are

what we are, and can find ways of becoming what we wish to become.

The body covers itself with inert substances in order to protect itself from cold and enemies. And in its interior it amasses the dead bulk of the frame to sustain it. In the same manner that which has died in our soul and become part of its structure performs tasks of unqualified importance. Mechanically, and without exercising our discriminating will, we repel one thing and attract another. Does not a particular individual inspire us with the same repulsion each time we see his image? And does not the same mood in nature enchant us each time we return to a landscape that once enchanted us? Unless we unburden ourselves of the inessential in everyday life, as the worker unburdens the toil of his muscles on his machine, we shall be unable in our great moments to give ourselves up with alert attention to the essential.

As the universe lies rigid and fixed in certain forms around us, and as it is held together in its movements by forces that work mechanically, so also our soul. The depths of our unconscious life, which no memory reaches, are indissolubly bound up with the heights of vision which no eye can attain. In paths fashioned by the meditation of millenia, our thoughts circle around problems that existed ten thousand years ago; and if they did not do this they would not be thoughts, but mere whims, without reference to the past and with no bearing on the future.

This is the mystery of death and the mystery of life at the same time: as it expands life always follows the dead tracks of the past. They are like cups filled with new streams of passion and desire. To him who understands this death will be a gain, and life cease to be a nightmare of insecurity.

But should anyone seek to achieve the gain and the security by defining a limit beyond which the disintegration and the

mechanisation would never again turn into integration and plasticity, and where the cup of life would remain for ever empty, he would be wrong. The mystery lies in the very fact that this limit is not a line that can be drawn or a wall that can be built: it is life itself, with its eternal shifting capacity, and its unlimited susceptibility to change.

We can scarcely tell when images cease to be a living stream that fills our soul with joy and makes each minute richer and greater than that which went before; or when they are changed into a drip of stagnant waters, each heavy drop that falls drearily adding to the stagnation within us.

In observing an action and trying to determine if the heart pulsates within it, or whether it is only a stone lifted from the breast and cast into the medley of human life, we often make mistakes. We cannot even draw conclusions from the result. The negation of life that is bound to follow some day in the track of the dead action may not show itself for years. It may not come to light until we are gone; and then possibly in forms no one could have anticipated.

The disintegration from which the strong man rises with new freedom to face life would to the weak man be a darkness from which he would never emerge to light during his earthly days. The strong man experiences the world mechanisation so completely that nothing in his soul is left untouched by the deadly grip that prevents suns and planets from leaving their orbits; and yet he becomes human again. Did the weak try to follow him they would be changed into atoms amidst circling atoms.

The weak character oscillates between the dissoluteness of inconstancy and the stubbornness of preconceived opinion; the strong is at once more plastic and more firm. To confuse his joyous, unexpected transformation with fickleness is to be blind to the smiling renewal that is seeking its way upwards

to expression. And he who takes his firmness for bondage knows nothing of the essentials in the nature of himself and of things that remain the same for ever.

I do not love the prophets of suffering. One day of sunny happiness brings me nearer to redemption than ten years of aching joints. But suffering is the concomitant of gradual extinction, and in that capacity it increases the possibilities of life's expansion. Suffering deepens us. And the measure of our happiness is determined by the depth of the cup we have to offer the renewal of life when it comes to visit our hearts.

## THE SYMBOL AND THE CLAIR-OBSCURE

It is thanks to death that we remain what we have become, and that our life persists on the course it has once assumed. But it is thanks to something else, equally inherent in the nature of things, that we become what we should become, and that our life, in its circuit, acquires meaning and purport. There are two currents in the depths that never dry up. One is always striving to overcome disintegration, and the other to overcome mechanisation.

As life glides down into its mechanical, everyday routine, the two lovers begin to grope for one another, and, not finding each other, believe that love is gone. They part. But when all details and all unessential things have vanished they face each other again, purified, as they faced each other during the first days of love. And they feel toward each other as then. In this victory of the essential over the many unessential things lies the significance of symbol-formation.

The poet knows it. He knows it from experience—this experience being not only a matter of his brain, but also a matter of his heart, his blood. And if he had not had this experience he would have lived in vain.

The moment of symbol-formation is also the moment of the clair-obscure. Then everything that he has achieved in the course of the years as he proceeded along the road of reason, discriminating and separating the essential from the unessential; all that he has achieved by the poignancy of his thought—all study of lines, rhythms, words, and images; all he has desired, searched for, believed, and visualised: all recedes into the darkness. And in its place something is lifted up into the light by a warm stream from the depths, by a wave from the



## VALUE AND APPEARANCE

I AM sitting on the steps, leaning my head against a round stone. The stone rests there as if dead and good for nothing but to be fitted into a wall, or, at most, to be used as an ornament. But as I listen I can hear how the stone was whirled about century after century by falling waters; I can see how its millions of crystals were pressed together by a process that required a still longer period, until the aggregate of them became malleable. As I listen and see, the appearance that is called reality gives way to a value, the symbolic value. The stone acquires life and becomes to me a symbol of the becoming of the world, and of the becoming of man.

Oh, the hour of great and holy happiness when in youthful rapture we begin to glimpse the core of our being! Our eyes gaze in wonder, unable to understand that which happens; can we believe the miracle? Slowly a word seeks its way over our quivering lips. It was ours always, but we knew it not. It was empty and meaningless. Not until now has the shell been filled with the contents of value and the word become a living symbol. As if it were a formula to exorcise the powers of darkness, we whisper the word and repeat it like the deepest secret: "I—I . . ."

We have been whirled around; and, as though we were worth no more than a stone, we have been ground among other stones so as to become sleek and smooth as it behoves a citizen to be. We have been hounded by joyless passions, by the ghosts of our emotions, and by still-born embryos of thought, and nowhere have we found peace. As the sleepless man tosses from side to side on the hot couch we have been tossed from unreality to unreality. We have strained our will after things we did not desire, and worked ourselves up and

become a prey to every accident. But when the ego-symbol makes the leap from allness to oneness, and we begin to live out of our own substance, then we perceive that we were the victims of a delusion when we believed that we were born the moment we were severed from our mother's body. Then we were only doomed to perdition in a world of disintegration and mechanisation. But in the moment of ego-formation we were born to life.

Not until then did we take a hold of life for the first time and definitely. Out of the warmest currents in our soul there rose a strong wave of communion, and all things hitherto divided and opposed became united and shared in the reconciliation. Nay, more: all that had been struggling in the race and in our times had been struggling in us too, though it had not been able to struggle through to clearness and redemption. Like idle seekers we roamed among the possibilities of our heritage, now thinking we were the image of our father and now the double of our mother. We followed every prophet of the time—out into the great morass of the time. But then there occurred a shifting of light and shade in the penumbra hovering over chaos; and there was day and night. And the day and night merged in a living clair-obscure, again to be separated. In the highest light self shone before us—a symbol of our essence and our world, and the indissoluble connection between them both. The light transfused all that had been, and delivered us from our fumbling impotence.

Oh, that the world of men should be such that this ego, born in jubilant joy, should bruise itself against the resistance of the ingrained and be dissolved, and become as the howling of restless winds among the clefts and thickets! That it must exhaust its forces on the empty sea of imbecility and die away in the calm of indifference! That we should be obliged to grip with the violence of our will the things that are disintegrating, and work ourselves up to prophetic fanaticism in the hope of compelling the rock out of which the water refuses to well

of its own accord! That that which was straight and clear in the moment our self was born must again become crooked and change into an inscrutable riddle!

He who confines himself exclusively to his practical task is like the round stone fitted into the wall: it stays where it has been put and cannot do otherwise. If we wish to see life grow beyond the appearance of reality and reach symbolic value, we must not shun the destructive forces. It is with man as with the poem—his human value is inseparably bound up with his value as a symbol that stands for something more than he. Or is it not true that the human value declines in each of us in proportion as we encyst ourselves, making our ego a dead wall between ourselves and the world?

Only he who has achieved the fullness of symbolic value can put his ear to the universe as I put my ear to the stone and listen as I listened to the stone's whisper, telling of ice and flood—only he can elicit, as he listens, the truth of the value of the universe that lies beyond its appearance.

## THE MAGICAL GOD AND HIS FOLLOWERS

WAS there ever a moment more pregnant with destiny than the moment when man became aware of the forces of renewal and reached out his hand to take his share of them? Apprehending the order that determines the course of events, he whispered the word "God," and built an altar. Wherever his descendants had their ways, and wherever they found something that bore witness to the world's longing for renewal, they built new altars. Whenever their faith in renewal won a victory in the struggle with death, they built columns around the altar, or protected it with walls, or spanned vaults over the holy place.

But why did not humanity from the very first apply itself to the discovery of the nature of renewal as exhibited in the fecundity of the earth and the longing of the human heart? What could be compared in importance to knowing death and renewal in their mutual struggle and their blending into a harmonious rhythm of life? Why did knowledge, as it grew into science, deal only with the death aspect of life, with the movements of the planets and the circling of thoughts? Why were men more bent on control over the dead channels in which the forces move than on the control of the living forms of renewal?

There is no word more beautiful than the word "God." It suggests the longing of the lover to keep his love alive, the humble man bowing his head towards the soil, and the straining of the strong to attain the victory of truth. But there is no word more dangerous than this; for it bars the road of knowledge. To seek to describe God's forms and action as we describe the paths of the sun and measure its forces would be blasphemous.

And worse: the word "God" opened up a field of operation for all kinds of deception. Conjurers, sons of gods, priests and prelates sought in all times to make people believe that they held the secret of reaching the spheres of renewal and the power to control them. Far from helping the seekers to participation in the mystery of renewal, the servants of the word made it inaccessible to others by their inane mysticism. The altars were made the stages of mysterious rites, with gestures and signs calculated not to propitiate the gods but to protect the ambitious claims of impostors. "Give us money and we will conciliate God with our prayers, and we will say masses for you and save you from eternal damnation." The longing of men made them build temples and kindle the lights on the altars; but the impostors killed their inspiring peace with their mumbling and magical trash. In this way the monstrosity of the magical god was created. And thus the word God became a channel through which the impurity of the human spirit ran down through the centuries. The sound of the word suggests to our minds the shout of the crusaders, the stench of the dungeons where the pure in mind pined away, and the flames of the *autos-da-fé* rising towards the sky.

No experience has left a deeper imprint on the life of humanity than the one that relates to the word "God." And no lines of fate ever proved more rigid and relentless than those which the word "God" wrought on its consciousness. Does anyone in our days believe in evil spirits? And yet, let the servants of the magical god tinkle their bells to exorcise the demons, and the masses will fall on their knees. Who lives in the Lord Sabaoth? And yet when they call out, "Holy is the Lord Sabaoth," there passes a shudder through men's minds. Alas for all wretched souls who long for holiness, but, being fettered by the magical power, are unable to achieve the freedom and purity that mark the way to the mount of holiness!

Wherever they had their ways, and over the portals of all

their temples, the followers of the magical god inscribed these words: "Of the tree of the knowledge of God thou shalt not eat." For could knowledge disclose the real order of things and show humanity the way to renewal their power would come to an end. When at last, irrespective of torture and laws, renewal broke forth and became a power, how was it possible that knowledge did not apply itself with the same energy to gain control of renewal as to gain control of the mechanical order of the world? Were even the men of learning subject to the same compulsion as the men of religion, without realising what bonds were holding them? Does there still linger a hidden and mysterious fear of the curse which the followers of the magical god pronounced on those who dared to touch their Lord—the source of their power?

But the days of the magical god are gone. The progress of knowledge cannot be checked. On the other side of the turning-point of time men will not build life on the mercy of God Almighty, but on the security of the rock, and on the assurance that fills the heart of the lover when the streams of the depths well forth, and when life overflows in mighty streams from the uplifted cup of life.

## LET US NOT BE MISLED

THOSE are not our most dangerous enemies who come to us in sheep's clothing and are inwardly ravening wolves. Most dangerous of all are those who are inwardly—nothing. It is they who annihilate. Against the wolves you can defend yourself. But how can you defend yourself against those who exhale their spiritual death as inevitably as the rose exhales perfume and the swamp spreads pestilence?

The world would not have been plunged into chaos through the wickedness of the unrighteous alone. It is the dead weight of the many who from the nursery glide on to the schools, from the schools to society, from society to their graves—of all those who will nothing, dare nothing, and believe nothing—that is the weight that has dragged it down. Touched by the hand of the living, things spring to life, but the dead man kills everything by his mere presence. The inert mass of the dead killed the world, and it sank—as a carcass sinks when thrown into the sea.

The world is a market-place. Let us not be misled by the successful, who rush about lauding their merchandise, and trying to make us believe that salvation hangs on the growth of output and the increase of the birth-rate. The secret of worldly success lies in that blankness of soul which ever impels us to feverish endeavour as a means of oblivion of ourselves. Nothing is more remote from a creative spirit than the activity of the men in the market-place.

The throng in the market-place like to enjoy a good laugh at the pranks of the merry-makers. They like to be intoxicated with words. Let us not be misled by the mountebanks of the word or the dexterity of clever fingers—even if they call the

word sacred, and the dexterity, art, especially if the masses approve and acclaim them. The rhythm and colours of intoxication can easily be mistaken for the redeeming outburst of the joy of ecstasy. If it were not for the "day after" they could hardly be distinguished one from the other.

Let us not be misled by beauty. Beauty is no merit, nor is it a crime. But it can become either. The harlot does not become a better woman because she knows the art of display, because she knows how to make her body attractive so that even the chastest man succumbs to its lure. And the shrines of the magical god do not become better guardians of holiness because they are adorned with exquisite taste and vibrate with tones that drug the senses.

Let us not be misled by the unshakable faith of the strong in faith. The strength of this faith is the very strength by which the rigidity of dogmas increased in the course of the centuries, not the strength with which life coursed through the soul to be transformed into sustaining values. Faith is not the art of clinging to that which was once implanted in us, even after it has faded into absurdity. Faith is that part of knowing which we feel will never change, never in all eternity. To attain to the heaven of a living faith we must have passed through the purgatory of living knowledge.

Still less let us be misled by the man of learning who views with scorn all things not to be measured by his standard or made to fit in with his formula. His soul has become mechanised to such an extent that it has got out of touch with everything but that which moves for ever in dead tracks. From the height of knowledge he denies the fact of renewal; no wonder, for his own susceptibility to renewal has dwindled to nothing with the progress of mechanisation.

Least of all let us be misled by the cold, sarcastic smile of the man of culture. To him the struggle of the spirit is vulgarity



and barbarism. But his culture signifies a loss of that plasticity which presupposes warmth, enthusiasm, and a desire to reach above oneself—that plasticity which is the border-line between death and life.

And let us not be misled by the self-assurance of those in power. The man who to-day sits on the emperor's throne may to-morrow be confined in prison. But he who to-day acquires a wisdom, in him the wisdom grows to-morrow. And wisdom redeems. Only the power that redeems has the secret of life. And only the living power is—power.

If you feel doubtful in somebody's presence, take my advice and keep silent. For in the silence the voices of the deeps become audible. If the silence is empty and terrifying, hasten away. But if it is filled with warmth and congeniality, stretch out your hand and say: "Forgive me that I did not at first understand who you were."

There is, however, a surer means of testing people as to their being alive or dead. *Solitude* is the acid test against which only gold is proof. In solitude you are pursued by all the forms of death that swept by you in the past, and those that seemed to you powerless grow and become appalling in their cruelty.

But if a friend approaches in your solitude's most hallowed hour; if he touches your heart and speaks words such as as you never heard him speak when he was actually in your presence; if your sense of holiness increases with your emotion as the words die away—then I beseech you: "Never forsake that friend, no matter what may happen to him or to yourself, or to that which has been between you."

## THE NEUROTIC'S LAMENT

"No one understands me. In my work, in my home, among those who call themselves my friends—everywhere I am alone. I cannot endure this loneliness. I suffocate. Help me!"

I should like to answer with a question: "Is there anyone whom *you* have tried to help—for whom *you* have been the drawbridge from the enchanted castle to that fairy-land where the living love each other and commune together?"

But the question remains unuttered on my lips. Why should I wound you in your most tender point? You have been hurt already too deeply by those to whom you turned in your distress, and who called your loneliness selfish. Each human being still lives like a wound in your breast.

Your very suffering consists in the fact that the bond between yourself and life is broken. All attempts to mend the breach are futile; they only intensify your consciousness of the irrevocable. And with the breaking of the bond everything falls asunder; and, as it does so, you grow cold—rigid with cold.

What good is your work to you when all you undertake runs through your fingers, scatters, and becomes as nothing in that empty loneliness about you? How could you ever hope to conquer in the unceasing conflict between equivalent contrasts, when your ardour is always torn to pieces by the effort of choosing until at last you want one thing as little as another?

You cannot, like the man of culture, give up all purpose and turn yourself into a looker-on, remaining as lofty and

cold and uncomprehending as he is in the face of all the misery of the world. The poor human heart keeps beating, and does not leave you in peace; it changes you into a restless moving back-and-forth. And if in the end feeling dies out for want of something upon which to feed, claims continue to call out of the void which feeling left behind it.

You cannot live on the illusions of the learned and the strong in faith. Suffering has made you honest. Or was it honesty that made you a sufferer? Is it because of your honesty you fail to find that which comes up to the standard? Or do you accuse the age unjustly when you say that it is empty, restless, and inhuman like yourself?

No; you are *the witness in eternity's cause against time.*

Who were the victims of demoniac epidemics in the past, and who danced at St. Vitus's festival? The over-sensitive and the easily moved. All were possessed by the powers of darkness conjured up by the magical god and his followers; but only in the over-sensitive and the easily moved did possession succeed in assuming grotesque forms.

We are all lonely like yourself and misunderstood like yourself. It must be so; since the age is the same disintegration for us all as it is for you, and since we all are seeking in vain the stable spot where friends may meet and homes may be built up. But in you loneliness becomes an indefatigable crying of the heart; and when petrification pursues you into the depths of night, you are roused by dreams of anguish and anxiety, and do not know whither to flee. Only you . . . The others, they who call themselves sane, let the river of time bear them onward, caring not whither it takes them, and caring even less what happens on the banks.

; You bear witness that reflects on those who, having undertaken to be the voices of eternity in the world of time, and to

build a spiritual home for men, proved themselves to be squabbling preachers who founded sects to fight one another. Could you, like the hermit, turn your back on all folly and give yourself up to ever-renewing nature, the forces of renewal would stir, and your loneliness would become your soul's abode. And could you, like the ecstatic, burn the bones of the dead and rise free in lofty visions you would be saved. But you remain fettered, hands and feet, in society with its noise and its thousand concerns. You can do nothing but bear witness; that is your fate. But do not weary of bearing witness. Without witness eternity will perish and time will prove victorious.

Fortify yourself against the tempter when he whispers in your ear: "If you cannot be free, seize the ultimate remedy!" For you must not grow shallow in your struggle. You know better than we do that physical death as compared to the death of the heart is like the ripple on the surface as compared to that which takes place in the deeps.

But should you, exhausted, fall by your own hand, then I shall carve these words on your tombstone: "The road to the future leads over the martyrs' bodies. Wake, ye men, that your children may not fall victims to the death of the age! Wake, that a day may dawn when eternity grows strong in everything that lives in time and no longer needs to bear witness against time!"

## THE PANDEMONIUM OF THE DEMENTED

A PROTRACTED, terrible cry that turns the blood to ice—unlike any other sound on earth, save perhaps the scream of a wounded animal in the thicket of the wild. Then silence—the silence of the desert. The heart pierced by that scream from the abode of the demented may cease to bleed from the wound, but it can never cease contracting from the scar—contracting in hatred for those against whom the insane would shriek forth their hatred, could they only understand the workings of Fate.

They spit at their guards—they would avenge themselves upon those who cut them off from life—they curse those who gave them birth—much as the man gone wrong always turns on those who cross his path, not on those who are actually to blame. As profound as their suffering is the depth from which the forces emerged which changed them into heaps of wreckage, whirling around with the dead uniformity of machines, when their souls went down to destruction. They should cry to all humanity: “Do you know what it means to feel the body breathing and moving after the *human* self has died?”

Why can they not be healed and go forth among their fellow-men sane and sound? We must all wander through the valleys of death. But why are these doomed to be deserted by the forces of renewal which lead us on through all suffering back to the human self? Why do the forces of renewal fail to create in them anything more than distracted ideas and dreams, as ineffectual to protect the wretches as is the thicket to protect the dying quarry? Is there no reply? Have they been crucified? And do they suffer guiltless for the sins of the ages? Have they been sacrificed that they may bear witness? . . .

Loudly and unanimously they bear witness against those who blocked up the currents of life, causing their waters to stagnate and to flow down polluted through the generations, turning poisoned souls into festering centres of anguish; against those who checked the advance of life towards human fulfilment in the struggle against all the powers of death that stand in its way.

They bear witness against those who skulked when faced with their burden, who resorted to drink and made whisky their god. Away, away from reality with its demands, its struggle in sacrifice and effort against disease, suffering, and pain! The call rings loudest against those who, cursing the vale of sorrow, lured men with heavenly visions away from the path of knowledge and obstructed the redemption to be derived from certitude.

They are witnesses against those who made gladness a sin and longing for freedom a crime; against those who preached death and damnation to the joy that causes woman to turn to man as the flower turns to the sun, that her beauty and fragrance may be released by him; against those who killed the instincts, thus conjuring forth the fiends of the dead instincts that bind men's souls and lash them to death.

They are witnesses testifying against those who with false promises of reconciliation lured men from the path—who declared the "Saviour," the "Redeemer of the world," to be the sole and true instance of human fulfilment, thus arresting the process of humanisation in its endeavour to produce new and regenerating forms—who placed oppression on the throne where the power of redemption should have its seat—who burned the pure of heart and struck down the pure in will; they bear witness against those who robbed life of its human substance and made it sink ever deeper in inhumanity. . . .

Against those who raised the word "God" in the way of

those who searched for a connection between the law of death and the gospel of renewal, thus casting out men's souls to perish in the dead circuit of world-mechanism, or in the empty light of celestial spheres—against those who called the terror of the magical god holiness, and thus barred the way to that rising in the fullness of the rhythm of death and renewal which is the mark of holiness.

But what is the use of all this testifying? The learned who can explain away life can also explain away death. Of the word "sickness" they make a magic formula with which to save mankind from self-probation. And life goes on in violence and vice and destruction.

But the cry shall rise until even the deafest shall hear. Until those who have awakened succeed in rousing those who slumber, the darkness of the world will shudder with the horror of the pandemonium.

## THE RESTLESSNESS OF YOUTH AND THE ANGUISH OF THE HEART

WHY are the days of youth filled with unrest, and why does anguish attend the twilight of awakening sensibilities? Is not growth gladness and night unblemished beauty when warmth like a faint promise hovers in the air?

The time of youth is the time of danger. When the sap rises in the tree-trunk, one night of frost suffices to kill the tree that has outlived the severity of winter. Its dangers do not leave the body any peace. It is not only the pent-up, rising sap that breeds feverish unrest, it is also the great yearning—and the dread that the yearning will fall asunder into fleeting sensations—and that life will fade away with these into nothingness. Or that our yearning will freeze to death.

In youth our skin is like the rosy-red skin of the newborn child. We suffer excruciating pain from things that would pass unnoticed by him whose skin has become rough in rubbing against the world. And, being wounded, we withdraw into ourselves—as suddenly as the snail when it disappears into its shell and shuts the entrance with its operculum. Once in our hole we cry: “Trample as much as you like; our shell will hold; it only grows harder the more you trample on it!” And later on we go out into the world with our shell of conventionality around us, and people are satisfied that we are out of danger at last, having become like the rest of them. We cower and shrink; and in our prison we are like to suffocate. But our skin is not yet able to endure the lash of scorn.

There comes a time when dangers multiply, and when our searching eyes cannot discover the slightest loophole to reality. Whether we open the door on a crack or withdraw



farther within ourselves, death faces us as unavoidable as ever. Instead of ascending towards human fulfilment we sink to the masses' negation of the human. As the earth is too strong for the falling stone, so the dead mass of existence is too strong for us. It is then that anxiety rises from the unseen—a nameless ruler over all things.

As pain warns us that danger threatens our bodies, as love announces that renewal is at hand, thus anguish warns us that death is impending: that we are sliding down the roads of disintegration and petrification. . . . We need help! Hands are upon our throats, and, like the damned, our mental pictures flash past us—a stormy procession—downwards to perdition.

We glide on. . . . But we are one with the world, with its past, and with everything that is at this passing moment. Anguish rises to confront us not only from the depths of our own destiny; it rises also from the depths of the age. And its intensity is in proportion to the intensity with which we desire that the world and the time may one day become what they have never been.

The learned call anxiety a disease. But as long as the world is diseased, everybody who is not to succumb to the world's contagion must have the gift of anxiety, that he may be warned thereby. Take heed when its first wave breaks through your soul; perhaps you will see eyes that gleam viciously in the darkness. Perhaps anxiety will save you as pain saves your hand when it approaches the fire too closely.

Anxiety is like the feelers which the snail extends as he seeks his way; anxiety is subtle, like them, and reaches farther into the future than thoughts and intuition. It is youth that knows the anguish of the heart as well as the fecundity of the rising sap; it is youth that will warn the world. Is the world perishing? Or does the world lie in the pangs of travail on the threshold of death? There was a time when the world's

pain was the world's keynote, when all the poets draped themselves in its cloak. May the gravity of "world anxiety" not prove a mere gesture! May it instead become the lever toward the world's renewal. And a road to the victory of love.

For whatever you pray, do not pray for a heart that is no longer able to tremble with anguish. For even longing vanishes from the heart from which anguish has vanished. And where the heart's longing has vanished, thought becomes empty and the whole world a hollow show.

Pray rather that your heart, over-sensitive, may vibrate with all that would make the age vibrate if it were alive as you are.

Pray that the restlessness of youth may become a searching—not for your own safety, but for that of the world. And pray that the heart's anxiety may become a beacon-light where the surf is most perilous.

## OUR BONDAGE AND OUR FREEDOM

THE axe of the pioneer falls heavily and vigorously upon trees that have seen a thousand years. Green pastures spread where once, from north to south, from east to west, the forest stretched without a break, and where never a human being dwelt. The earth gathers strength to bear useful plants, and men grow with the growing power of the soil.

But wherever the pioneer turns the forest rises, threatening. It is a conquered enemy, ever ready to reconquer that which has been snatched from it. The nights are dark, and the darkness is full of dangers. Let him who wishes to preserve what he has achieved be ever on his guard!

It must be so. The pioneer is a force struggling in the wilderness, swallowed up the instant he flags in his struggle. And we are pioneers. We must capture through struggle the fields we call our soul, in which we are to live. And if we are to thrive on earth we must animate with our own soul the world in miniature that is our province. In the midst of society, as in a desert of human masses, we must create a community of our own, with its own activities, its own laws and relations, and its own ways. And first and foremost its own shrines and tabooed places.

We cannot prevent destiny from settling heavily and oppressively upon us when in our mother's womb we are formed in her image, and in the image of our father, and in that of all who went before them. Who can prevent aspirations and errors of the past from reappearing in us and acquiring power where we ourselves would wish to be masters? Volcanoes are not to be moved by prayers and cries of woe, neither racial volcanoes nor those that arise from the

earth, a constant menace to the towns and hamlets on their slopes.

No matter how far we have advanced in our pioneering work, no matter how safe we feel within the walls of our home, we shall always be threatened by a multitude of forces. Each time we attain a faith in the joy of freedom the past seeks to poison the faith, whispering: "Would *you* be right? And the millions before you all wrong?" Luring us with the bait of success, the community is ever ready to make of us something else than that which we were born to become. Each independent form is a ridge on the cog and must be worn away. We must protect with never-failing vigilance what we have created against our enemies, visible and invisible.

The root of the compelling force that controls our life is to be found in the law of death. But there is also a *freedom*. It springs from the gospel of renewal.

It is his longing to see the earth renewed, and himself renewed through the earth's renewal, that inspires the pioneer to ceaseless effort. Renewal is ever at work in all of us as it is in him. Like him we must be "the strength that never weakens, the hope that never fails." Never must we degenerate into mere inanimate tracks over which the past rolls gloomily and relentlessly on towards the future. If we deny the necessity of renewal anxiety rises as its eternal witness. Quivering through body and soul, it asks: "Do you not see what threatens yourself and your loved ones? You must clear more ground, and through you the spirit must increase its generative power. Do you not hear your enemies howling in the lifeless dark? You must reach them; you must find paths to the regions of freedom. Put the axe to the root! And if a mountain rises in your way, you must up over dizzying heights and down through perilous depths." Anguish will not release its hold upon you until you hearken to the call, until you answer—not with words, but with deeds.

He who has tried it and knows that his essential being grows freely out of the renewing forces of the soul, just as the world of the pioneer grows out of the fecundity of the wild he has cleared, does not ask if "reason is free," or if "will is free"; he sees to it instead that all that is his becomes a way of freedom.

Therein lies our freedom: that we can seek our way up to heights where our emotions are no longer stifled, but may rise strong and redeeming—as with the trained mountaineer. He knows that the soul is lifted on mighty wings in air that has never been defiled by foul vapours nor by coarse words. Why, then, do you drug your restless heart with noises from the turbulent world of men, with harsh sounds and shrill colours? And why do you try to burn it at the stake of carnal desire when its unrest does not yield to gentler means? Ask instead: "Why are you restless, O my heart? Answer, and I will never weary of bearing you up towards the heights for which you yearn!"

Therein lies our freedom: *that we can bind ourselves* and through our bonds overcome the laxity owing to which all that which is adrift succeeds in driving us into the impasses of unfreedom. What we cannot achieve alone may be achieved in union with others. But no one reaches the freedom that lies in *compulsion* unless he has the courage to face that which compels him, and the strength to declare, "Henceforward I am in your power—may it redeem me!" Why, then, do you not always seek the liberating bonds of a genuine communion? Why do you let accident and hope of success determine your vocation? Why don't you ask: "Do I belong to it? Do I belong to those whom I shall meet in it?"

We must be pioneers not only in our own soul—we must be pioneers in the world as well. The world shall be renewed out of our power for renewal; in our freedom the world shall attain freedom.

## A YOUTH OF ARDENT SPIRIT

I AM seized with fear when I witness your defiance, and when I see you, like a horseman astride a foaming steed, with a ravished woman on his saddle-bow, dash on towards the future. I fear not for your sake. Even should you fall headlong, and should the world smother your fire and force you to consume yourself, you will not perish. With even half your strength you will remain stronger than the rest; and if you are consumed there will be more heat in your ashes than in the wooden images that were never burnt.

When I see you I am seized with fear for the world. Too often the world lets the light go out from meanness; not heeding that the light was a beacon. And often it runs aground in those very places in the sea where once the light shone brightly.

Be on your guard, if not for your own sake, at least for the sake of others. Be on your guard when assailed by the forces of passion, lest you rend yourself by continence, or in the unbridled frenzy of passion are turned into an explosive that makes a noise and works mischief. Above all, do not make peace on dishonourable terms with the powers that urge you; do not sell the birthright of the spirit for an office or a decoration. Only a reconciliation that is complete and sincere can bring you the peace your heart desires.

Do not consume yourself with impatience when the inert compel you to wait. "Keep your place in the line," they exhort you. If you stretch out your hand in a desire for conquest and cry out: "It is manly to take—and in taking to give more than can be given by unmanly meekness," then they will whisper to one another: "Keep your eye on him; he

is a danger; he does not know the decree of social order that none may have a larger share of happiness than others—especially not a greater share of the joy of work or the satisfaction of giving.”

When in fierce desire for life you thrust from you your past, daring a leap beyond your own self to reach some purer air, they will flout you: “A spasmodic will, capable of nothing, an empty gesture—that is all he is in his conceit.” But do not let yourself be thwarted. Even should you build the house of your spirit ten times too high, and even if it be left empty for years, you will succeed in the end in filling it with what you have made yours and with the treasures of your own creation. He who has experienced the grip of your will and looked out over the regions of your heart will not doubt.

You will meet them, the lords of inert resistance, in the conventional forms of learning and culture, and you will ever have to fight the very fight we all have fought. But do not be appalled. Do not let their gestures and their numbers overawe you. Even though you cannot say with the strong in faith that God stands behind you in glory and omnipotence, you can say with us: “The world lies before me waiting in distress.” To know that they are needed to help is for the noble minded a greater spur to renewed effort than to know that there is someone who can help them.

The salt of the earth! The world is not a piece of meat that must be kept from rotting. The world is desire to grow and to take form—to grow spiritually as well as materially. You are not the salt of the earth. You are the flame that kills the microbes so that the power of growth may not be checked by anything. Do not slight life’s enemies because they are small; do not forget that, left to themselves, they multiply at an alarming speed.

May they not prove too much for you—the many that bite their teeth in bitterness because life passes them by, the many

that use their strength to prevent others from reaching what they themselves have missed. May they not tie you down to joy-killing duties, forcing you to sacrifices that take without giving in return, to sacrifices without the sacrificial fire.

And may you never yield to the lure of success, honour, and riches, to become a shrivelled heart that will disturb no one's indolence. In the hour of danger remember the man who rose from death in bourgeois well-being to become a youth again, and on beholding the foul creature he had become exclaimed with disgust: "Fie, devil, fie, earwig, half stomach and half claw: have you found any carrion—or a worm to turn into carrion?" This was, of course, only a dream; and the next day he drank the same wine as usual with his dinner. But to you it might happen in reality. He in whom there glow the embers of youth is never proof against miracles.

More than once the tempter will meet you in his most dangerous guise and will whisper in your ear: "You are wasting your life. Don't you see that the struggle will always be as futile as it has been hitherto? The righteous have no power, and if they acquire power their righteousness vanishes. Let the world have its course, love your woman, and enjoy the days you have to live." If he does not retreat before your "*Vade retro, Satanas*," or before the conjurations you learnt in your struggle, or at the thought of the martyrs you loved, then whisper quietly to yourself:

"You wanderer—you, the rebuilder of the world."



## A BLUSHING WOMAN

You blush. And your blush is lovelier even than your smile. Are streaks of red blending in your dreams? Does the blood rush through your veins as in the moment of embrace? But why be ashamed? Or is it not from shame that you blush? Perhaps only from happiness because life is awaiting you!

May it not wait in vain; and may you rise from the regenerating bath of sensual delight like a goddess, rich in the art of giving and overflowing with its bounty; and may your sunny smile hover redeemingly over the world's cold. May life not only liberate the generative power in your womb and the yearning of your swelling breasts; may you come to know corporality as a short cut to that which is highest.

But be on your guard! Do not forget that love is the sign of renewal. The chalice of the senses holds a regenerating draught only for him that is worthy and well prepared by love. To others it marks the passage from fire to ashes.

More than once your vineyard will be in peril, and the lava streams of passion will encircle it with dead fire. Chastity is not enough to make a woman worthy—not flight from that which burns without purifying. She must be able to conquer death in all its forms—even in its form of fire. That, through her victory, she may purify what is impure.

Help your lover, deliver him in the name of communion, and lead him on to renewed tenderness. Do it while there is yet time. Otherwise you may wake some night to find yourself changed from a symbol of regeneration into a breeding animal. That night you will learn what anguish is, if you have not known it before.

It is not the body's nudity that fills a woman with shame when the man seizes her as an instrument of desire: it is before the *nudity of life* that the lustre of virginal beauty fades into anguish and loathing. But *you*, who are life's adornment and its eternal source of renewal, you must save life from the curse of nakedness.

Never forget that you are the race, and that the race is the symbol of eternity—the only symbol of eternity known to the many. Therefore you shall bear the imprint of serenity beyond the turmoil of time: a serenity like that of the sun, which being closed in itself becomes a radiating force—a blossoming abundance in frozen soil.

The home you build up around yourself and yours shall not only release them from the grip of work-a-day life and heal them when torn asunder by diverging claims. Your home shall be a source of future power for the deep and warming floods that should never be allowed to run dry, for those who shiver with cold in the desolation of the world.

May emptiness and evil never conquer in their assault upon the walls of your shrine. May the voice of your beloved never be as a voice crying in the wilderness; may you yourself never be as a mirage that dissolves into air and vanishes as he tries to reach you. Terrible though loneliness can be, it is always better than life with a ghost.

And may your home never become like a dwelling lost in the woods, where yours come like storm-driven animals to eat and sleep and irritate each other, and where none understands the other's language. And may the hour never strike when you seek refuge in the struggle of the age that the cry of your heart may be drowned in its tumult.

I wish you so much; and my overflowing heart would wish you even more. Not merely for your own sake. In the

ocean of life there are deep currents ; it depends on yourself if these currents are to bear warmth or cold to the future. It depends on you, Woman, who is to liberate stillness and eternity, whether the shores of the future shall be verdant or buried in ice.

## **PART II**

# **SACRIFICE AND ATONEMENT**



## A MORNING IN THE ROSE-GARDEN

“WHAT must I do to be saved?” man asks. And this question burns unceasingly in his heart. It rises like a cry of pain, where the broad streams of generations wind their way across the plains of existence and disappear where all things disappear—all things save the cry for salvation and the evidence thereof.

But on the lips of those who have become frozen in despair this question also freezes. When the heavy silence of dead souls is broken for an instant, it seems as though the air were filled with stifling smoke, and out of the smoke there rises a murmur: “There is no salvation; there is only damnation—the damnation of hunger, the damnation of labour, and always the damnation of war.”

“Let us dance and be merry”: thus the shouting of the dissolute. “There is no salvation—there are only times of intoxication. Drink of the moment’s joy, and let not a night pass without woman. Soon it will be too late. Life is nothing but a devastating revelry of all things. He who does not seize it in its flight to let it go when it is fleeting had better never have been born.”

Do not listen to them, you, my companion! Do not repeat their cry. Learn, instead, to comprehend the bliss of the earth where it spreads before you with its flowers and lofty trees—slowly ascending to the hill where the altar stands among poplars—symbolising at one and the same time that which is finite and that which is infinite; but above all symbolising the will to live.

From earth art thou come and, during thy pilgrimage on earth, earth shalt thou ever remain. It is the earth that calls

in the call of your heart; and it is the earth that curses within you when you curse your father and mother for giving you life. Why, then, do you not reach out for your share in the bliss of the earth? Were you never aware of its bliss?

The light of the dawn is on my face. Impatiently I steal out of the house as soon as it begins to glimmer on the window-panes. Like a lover who has long been yearning in vain, and whose cheeks are flushing with joy, the eastern sky rises over the forest ridge. I step into the chill water of the lake as it lies glowing before me. Its surface is without a ripple.

The soil and all the trees and flowers are spun with gossamer webs. Dewdrops glitter and flash like millions of precious stones. The cooling grasses sweep about my naked feet, and as the gravel of the rose-garden crunches under my steps it seems as if the earth were whispering something into my ears. But this whisper does not disturb the infinite stillness of the earth.

Did men know what they were doing when they stripped every branch of its roses, not even sparing so much as a petal? Did they know what they were doing when they plaited thorns and dry twigs into a crown, and made of the crown a symbol of life? Did they know the symbol's power to compel, and how men are shaped in its image? Why did they change life's rose-garden into a crown of thorns? Why did they substitute suffering for salvation?

There comes a fragrance from the swelling buds; and when they burst it is as if the bliss of earth could no longer restrain itself. See the branches bending under their weight of white roses! Is not the earth more radiant with purity than any woman in her chastity?

The earth reaches perfection by giving and taking. If you would learn to understand the wonder of giving and taking, then behold the way that dead noisome juices follow when

from the soil they rise through the stem, and from the stem breathe forth an intoxicating fragrance wherever life has freed itself and roses hang full and heavy.

Take and give as the earth takes and gives, and the bliss of the earth shall become yours also. There will be nothing so dead but it may gain deliverance and a fragrant sweetness in you.

Beware lest you become like the rock that says to the seed of the rose when it begs for aid: "It is no concern of mine whether you live or die. I am what I am; I need no adornment." Or like the discouraging thicket: "Can you not see that I have enough already? There is no room for you here." Or like the flower-bed as it begs, with a courtly gesture of refusal: "Pray do not disturb my order—to me all things are weeds."

Seize, rather, every chance that life offers you—that yet another seed may sprout from your soil. And when you have seized it, cling to it. Do not allow a fickle wind of accident to tear the seed from you; and when it sprouts, tend it and see that neither frost nor pelting rain can reach it.

Be on your guard against enemies, and do not forget that those that seem smallest are most to be feared. But more dangerous than any are those that hide in the earth to gorge on tender roots. Watch the earth. . . .

For you shall help humanity to twine its coronet of roses. May your branches grow sturdy shoots when the earth exhales her breath of spring; and may they bend beneath the luxuriance of summer as long as summer lasts.

Do not stand empty-handed when he comes round whose head a wreath of roses shall be twined instead of a crown of thorns. May the fresh and fragrant cluster that adorns his brow come from your garden of roses.



## THE GREAT STILLNESS OF CONTEMPLATION

LIFE comes and goes. When you shut your door in despair, cursing all effort, and declaring that things never can be other than they are, suddenly it is there, as if it were a woman whimsically mocking the reluctant. And when, overflowing with warmth, it approaches you so close that it seems one with yourself, and when you whisper, "Come closer still—stay with me!"—then you find yourself snatching at the empty air.

But though the will of life is another than your own, you are not powerless as the man without a will is powerless. You will have noticed that life comes to some sooner than to others; you know, too, that one temperament is more successful in attracting than another. If you can find the secret of this fact you may one day find a way—not the way of outwitting the mystery, but the way to accord with it.

Does all hang on humility? Or on freedom from hate and harshness? Or is stillness the word that brings you nearest to the essential? Is not stillness the gateway of the great road that leads on to union with all things? Life knocks unceasingly at a tranquil heart; but to those who have been turned into a brain teeming with plans and clever schemes only honour and riches accrue.

If you ask how you are to find the way of union, I reply: "*See to it that you do not lose it.*" Like all born of a mother, it is yours from the beginning. But, like all born to the world, it may be lost to you in the world's diversity. And if you have lost it you will seek it in vain along the paths where the masses move.

As the warming light of the sun flows down through space into the soil, your mother's blood ran down from her heart through you. The air she breathed and which gave her body the energy of combustion cleansed your blood also. Her yearning was your yearning, and when she trembled with fear you trembled also.

You were alive, but there was no dividing wall between you and that which lived around you. *The stillness beyond the world of things* had not yet been broken; you lay embosomed in the great silence of oneness and union. Eyes and ears had not yet been unmercifully opened to convey to you your doom—to be drowned in this world of disruption.

There came a day when, unsuspecting of evil, you were launched into a cold and strange world. The content you knew when again you could rest at your mother's breast to drink sustenance from her body was but a fading memory from the time when you were wholly hers—when you belonged wholly to the earth—and when through the earth you belonged wholly to the living All. You did not know the value of freedom then, still less the joy we feel when, being freed, we recover the union that has been lost.

Your skin has toughened, and within its wall you have suffered in solitude; with all its feelers and with eyes and ears you have reached out from this solitude—for what? For all transitory things? Or for stillness and that power of growth which you have not known since stillness was lost? For the joy of recovering that which has been lost?

Men knew of old that it was better that the whole world should perish rather than that stillness should be lost. They built cloisters and immured themselves therein; doing all they could to prevent man from being born to the world. The walls of the cloisters became giant ramparts checking the awakening lusts of the flesh; and all yearning was repulsed

by them. They hoped that the cloister garden would restore to them the peace of their mother's womb.

Aye, it is not the tumult of the streets, nor the pranks of merry-makers, that disturb the stillness; it is the call of the blood and the longing for renewal. Heaven and hell rush through your veins; and go wherever you will, you will always remain ensnared in the network of the pulses. Where did men burn with hotter passion, and where did they reach more fiercely for the spheres of ecstasy, than in the gloom of the cloistered cells?

When, at the coming of night, you cut off every connection with the multiplicity of the day, to withdraw within yourself, then you withdraw also into the renewing forces of life. Having drawn on them, you rise renewed from sleep. Your soul is ready and prepared for the struggle of the day.

But if you wish to find the road that leads on to the secret of salvation, you must learn first of all, with consciousness maintained, to cut off the connections with all that disturbs your mind, and to become absorbed in the union beyond things. When, at the sound of bird-song, or of falling drops from the melting snows in spring, you sink into yourself and the world about you, then you evoke the great stillness. It rises like a blessing out of all those unessential things which time has heaped up, and beneath which it has lain buried. This blessing brings with it creative and renewing forces.

When you have practised the art of contemplation and made stillness one with your own being, you can wander unharmed where but recently you were steeped in the world's ugliness and discord. You are conscious only of a distant rumbling. While the train thunders on over lands where cities flit past like smoking dunghills in a drab monotonous expanse you will not notice the smothering air, nor hear the

pestering noise. You live in a greater quietude than the nun in her cloister-garden.

And when stillness and contemplation have become the abode of your soul, their capacity of renewal will be as potent as was your body's power of growth when you lay in your mother's womb.

## EYES THAT COMPEL

You toss a bank-note on the table, saying: "I'll take that picture; send it home." Your gesture plainly betrays that you have not asked the picture if it wants to become yours. And home! Did you say *home*?—As though you had a right to speak of home if your rooms are filled with things that have no desire to be there—things that perhaps have sworn enmity to you into the bargain!

You look surprised, as though you would ask: "Have objects a will? How absurd!"—and complacent, as though you would add, "Superstition!"

Have objects a will? Apparently you have never pulled a pine-stump out of the ground. If you had, you would know that you may keep at it from sunrise until late at night, sweating, chopping, and commanding: "You shall!" only to receive an answer at once ironic and pathetic: "I will not!"

No wonder if, hour after hour, you toil in vain. Before you the storm has done likewise for centuries, roaring again and again: "You shall!" If you fail to hear the triumphant ring in those words "I will not!" you may gradually learn to know it from the ache in your joints and muscles.

Do you not understand that the will with which the tree rose upwards facing the storm survives in its roots, or rather dwells in its roots, as every beaten path of the forces left by a happy experience dwells within you? Call it the will to live, or the struggle for existence, or the lust for power, or what you will—only do not imagine that it is only in human beings that life flourishes and leaves dead paths behind it as

it dies. The same is true of everything, and of the world as a whole.

In everything that is shaped by groaning machinery there lives the whole trend of the world that created the age of mechanisation. Do you not hear how matter, brutally and relentlessly pressed into inert forms, keeps sighing for freedom and longing to be caressed once more by the hands of craftsmen? Do you not hear how the smooth faultless things keep on replying, "Impossible!"

What do you know of the will which strained within the master, and year after year manifested itself in new and futile efforts, until one day it faced him—become perfect—in that very creation of which you now claim ownership? Faced him—and died. What do you know of the art of ownership, unless you feel that its object is to rouse the will to resurrection from its grave?

A note on the table! As though the thing were as unchaste as any girl walking the streets! And as though even the girl ever gave you her heart because you procured with your money the right to her body! Her heart will never be yours. Even in the most wanton there beats a heart that is not to be bribed with gold. How much more, therefore, in things!

Did you but dimly suspect the yearning and the suffering that found expression in that work you acquired, you would shamefacedly stuff the note into your pocket and go home with empty hands. For it is too much to hope that you should repent and strive to win the friendship of the thing, and perhaps in the course of time even its love. That would be too much trouble for you!

It is not easy to approach a thing so that it draws near and nestles close to your heart like a child that longs for tenderness.

Things are stubborn by nature. They must be compelled. If man did not possess the power to compel with his eye . . .

Do you know what it is that gives this power? Shall I reveal the secret? The glance that compels does not come from the eyes that mirror the world and its diversity, nor from the soul with its thousand changes. It must not wander like a homeless thing nor spy like a bird of prey; it must not be the glance of a dreamer; and least of all must it show traces of the struggle of unconscious forces . . .

To have power the eye must reflect the great stillness and be filled to the brim with that warmth and superabundance of life which exist only in its depths.

Look at a thing thus and you will see its fettered forces stirring: good will and friendliness will come streaming towards you. Perhaps you will be amazed at the suffering that can slumber in a thing which hitherto you thought was mere indifference.

And do not imagine that you will ever learn to know man and his world before you have learned to discover the soul and meaning of the simplest of things. To say nothing of that which is more than man, and in comparison with which the world shrinks to a dream-picture of the moment.

## THE CUP OF LIFE

You have watched a flower unfolding and stretching towards the sun, following its course across the sky; eagerly drinking what warmth and light the sun may drop into the opened chalice? But did you ever see men, urged by the same impulse, reach out into space, that the immensity of life and the power of growth may fill their cups?

Raise your heart toward the light, and lift the cup of life that it may fill with glorious gifts, and that mankind may drink renewal from its brim! Accept every day vouchsafed you as a gift with lifted hands. Rest assured that life will come to you in one form or another, and rest assured that you may make of the day a whole life.

Fools reach with the cumulative strength of their memory for that which life has taken, kneading every sordid experience until it grows and swells into an avalanche that tears every living thing away with it to destruction. Those who are wise reach for that which life has given, in order to guard it in the shrine of memory, that it may bear fruits and become sweetness in the cup.

The earth is full of passions. Intoxicating juices rise from her bosom, and other juices become intoxicants through the influence of the warmth of heaven. Be on your guard! Intoxication is like friendship—faith in the future grows under the sway of either. But nothing is more detrimental to the future than a friendship that has turned into enmity; and intoxication always carries a dagger under its cloak. If you have nothing but intoxicating words and intoxicating visions of beauty to offer to thirsting souls, let them know at least



that your gift is only a gift for the moment, and cannot serve as nourishment on the road of life.

The earth is full of poisons also. Have no fear if you find that your cup is being filled with them—with the poison of pent-up passion—with the poison of disappointed dreams—with the poison of justified bitterness. Remember rather that the potent remedies are also strong poisons; it is for the physician to handle them. How can you employ them if you have not tried their effect on yourself? Pent-up passion is a remedy for conceit—disappointed dreams are a remedy for laxity—justified bitterness is a remedy for the faith that is not certitude, the faith that works nothing but harm.

Have no fear either if you have to live in permanent revolt against fate, and if the futility of your own revolt makes of your cup a chalice of suffering shot through with streaks of blood from your own heart. For this is the simple art of life: to be fettered to the powers of fate as the flower is fettered to the soil—and yet, like her, to strain toward the light. And to smile as she smiles.

Look for the wonderful, not for the strange. Could your cup be filled with a magic drink that would make the blind see, the afflicted happy, and yourself a famous miracle-worker—what good would it be? He whose eyes have not been opened by suffering of his own will soon relapse into blindness, and the afflicted one who has not by his own effort turned grief into joy soon falls back into his grief. The knowledge that in humility we are showing others the road to the renewing forces—the greatest miracle of nature—is better than any miracle-monger's fame.

But if you strain and supplicate *in vain*, do not grow weary. If days and years pass emptily over your head, and if the cup remains as light as it was at first, then, in the days to come, strain upward more fervently, and make your prayer stronger

year by year. And if, to your own shame and to the disappointment of others, you should find your cup filled with that which the dying ages have left behind them, then pour it out upon the ground, and let the ground absorb it as if it never had been. Emptiness is better than lies. For emptiness can be filled with reality, but lies are always filled with the same lies.

Do not grow weary, and do not cast down the cup in despair if, humanly speaking, you have reason to despair. What do you know of your fate, and of the fate of the world, and of the way in which fates are interwoven? You do not even know if you are the root that is to seek its way deeper and deeper into the darkness to reach new well-springs; or if you are the stem through which the sap will rise, and which will never know whence it comes or whither it goes; or if perchance you are the fruit in which the sap is to be set free in sweetness.

The one thing you *do* know is this: if you knew everything, life would cease. It is the tension of uncertainty that saves you from the nausea of disgust. It is the power of this tension that lifts the soul on its flight. Do you not see how eagerly the flower awaits the sun's blessing? Wait as the flower waits! And do not take your wide straining eyes from the cup; perhaps it will brim over when you least expect it.

Only he who from the stillness of the depths strains towards the heights in prayer will one day know the great miracle—the same miracle that releases from the earth the colour and fragrance of the flowers. You will know it. You will feel beauty becoming a lever towards creation and knowledge a way to fulfilment. And there will be no quarter of the depths to which you may turn, but you will find drops of the eternal at the bottom of your cup.

## THE CRY OF HUMANITY

HUMANITY cries out in despair and helplessness. While they cry people wring their hands, or count the beads of rosaries, or sway their bodies to and fro. Do they think to move by gestures one who is not to be moved by their cries?

Do they not know that cries and gestures merely harden him who has shut himself up in inaccessibility, and will give nothing of his own accord? When they throw themselves down upon their knees, mumbling confessions and prayers for mercy, have they forgotten that nothing is more difficult for the strong to condone than lack of pride and dignity?

When they have worn themselves out with crying and realised their own impotence they begin to whisper: "To have our prayers answered—that is, to bow down before the Almighty, and to accept His will as though it came from ourselves!" And they sigh: "There is no other way than that of submission. Let us seek happiness and joy in submission, and let self-renunciation be our aim." They seek and seek. But in place of happiness and joy they find duty; and the air grows heavy and oppressive.

Our forefathers were fierce and proud, and shot arrows toward the sky to intimidate and silence the god of thunder, and to avert the peril of lightning. They were no wiser than those that cry and clamour, and they succeeded no better. But he who silently and calmly pondered the nature of thunder and lightning, oblivious of himself and lost in his reflections, discovered the secret; and the thoughts that were the outcome of his cogitations led to salvation. Without cries and gestures he attained the power which the others would never have reached had they continued crying for a thousand years.

Do they not realise that *understanding* is the only way to power over living things, as it is the only way to power over the inert forces of nature? Have they not noticed how strangely a person is changed into wax, and becomes willing and pliable in our hands, the farther we penetrate into his inmost nature?

He who can loosen a fettered tongue, and is permitted to hear what no other ear has heard, thereby becomes a fact in the other's life. And he who can listen so keenly that he perceives what the other has hitherto revealed only to himself in his most silent moments will become a companion who goes with him into his solitude; and he who was fettered will speak to him as he speaks with his own heart.

If you can hear in him the voices of his deepest self, voices too faint to be audible even to himself when he listens most intently, then he will always come back to you, and beg you to teach him to understand his fate. And in interpreting his fate for him you yourself will gradually grow into a force that determines his fate. Woe to you if meanwhile you fail to see the responsibility that lies in this power.

Can you see now how understanding changes the powerless man into a power? There is little need to ask anything of him whose eyes and heart you have opened. Whatever he possesses of value will stream towards you out of all which, through you, has come to light. Even if he wished it, how could he keep back the goodness and the power which you liberated through your understanding?

Each depth you can open up becomes to you a well into which you may dip. Through understanding you partake of the strength of the strong and the purity of the pure and the will to beauty of those who worship beauty. Instead of coming back to yourself in weary disappointment you tread with a

light step, rejoicing that you are able to do that for which hitherto you have striven in vain.

Have you ever stood before a block of marble in which a thousand years ago a man expressed his longing and his happiness? Have you known this work turn into a well-spring of life's living water? And have you heard this well-spring purling the more buoyantly the farther you followed the master into his days of revelation?

Has this caused you yourself to expand with his will, and feel new unguessed forces well up in your soul—forces that strained towards the aims that were the master's? If not, then you stand far from the mystery of life, and I can only wish that you may learn to know it. The day you have learned it will be one of your happiest days.

Afterwards you will look for that wonderful revelation wherever you go. When you hear thunder rumbling in the distance, you will say to yourself: "I can no more stop at the roar of the thunder than I stopped at the lines and planes of the statue: through everything seen and everything heard I must go down to that which *is*—through the earth down to the fountain-head."

To the beating of the surf against the rocks and the sighing of the wind among the trees you will listen no longer as you listened before. Above all, you will no longer look into that brimming abyss called a man with the same questioning indifference. Everywhere you will break through the wall of the senses between you and your revelation.

The forces that were bound when the spirits of the ages carved their longing into the world-material will stir and become free; all that has ever streamed from the opened skies of inspiration will stream down upon you. The silence which

from the beginning of time has lain brooding over endless secrets will come to life and speak to your heart.

You will rise—proud that the world has become wax in your hands. You will bend your head in humble gratitude because your prayer has been heard. For the answer to our prayers is a living share in everything through which everything was called into life.

## THE WILL OF GOD AND MAN'S DISCERNMENT

Do not believe those who say: "There is neither good nor evil. Good is evil, for goodness weakens, and the weak go under. Evil is good, for as iron is related to ore so is wickedness to strength—you must have a soul of iron to assert yourself in the world."

Do not believe them. They know less than the plant, for the plant knows that the soil of the fertile grove is good for it and the mountain crevices bad. You must learn to distinguish the soil and air that give you the strength and desire to expand and to grow from the soil and air in which you will pine away.

There is nothing of which you can say that it is good always and for everyone. You cannot point to God as to a tool in your hand. Neither is there anything of which it is true that it is for ever bad, and bad for everyone—that it is the devil. But it is equally certain that there is something of which you can say: "This is the most divine thing that I ever encountered; here let me remain." And perhaps you have reached your ultimate and essential truth when you can lay your hands on something and declare: "This is my worst devil—begone!"

Still, they were right in times past who claimed that the devil had a hand in the creation of the world, and that without him it would never have been created. Think of yourself. Would you ever have been able to find your own self and become the man or woman you are if the wickedness of the world had not driven you to look into yourself, and if the anger of men had not evoked in you new forces of creation? Who can tell? The devil may, after all, have been a greater

help to men than God the Father. He, at least, did not forsake them in their extremity. He roused them and made them suffer. And suffering helped them to find the way.

But it was not with the devil's victory, it was with his *defeat* that the world began, and that you yourself were lifted up to new heights of discernment. Anguish warns you that death threatens you, though it does not tell you whence. It is for you to find out—and at the same time to find the path of renewal. Each time you stray into the power of evil you call in vain for renewal of life—until the moment when discernment comes to you, and you can tell white from black. Again, if you lose the power of discernment you will slide down the deadly roads of disintegration and mechanisation.

Be on your guard against all who offer you help when they see you groping and fumbling, trying to find the road. One will say: "Twice two are four; this is right!" Another: "Follow the promptings of your heart!" The next: "I am righteous; obey my will and you will act rightly!" And still another: "Right is what is necessary."

He who wishes always to see life new and filled with the joy of awakening must never cease his quest and his wonder; he must not depend on answers given once for all. A thousand times I wandered through the mazes of the learned until my strength failed me, and as often I cried out my distress in the night. But later, when everything had become still in my soul, an image rose before me. And with it as a lode-star I found the road of discernment.

The darker the worlds we have to traverse, the brighter the torch of discernment must shine. But most dangerous of all are those who come to console you as the darkness increases and the anguish grows into agony; those who for wisdom offer you a word—God. For it was from sluggishness and sloth and to escape the hazards of discerning



that men drew a line between good and evil, calling that line God's will.

The magical gods wanted so many strange things. One of them demanded that man should cut open his breast and tear out his heart; another insisted on self-mutilation. No wonder that men were perplexed, that their cry changed into a cry of the earth, into a roar like the hungry roar of the lion, into the sighing of all living creatures, and the shattering noise of a landslide. While God's will robbed men of their power of discernment they sank ever deeper into the power of the devil.

It is not a line that separates the land of good from the land of evil—it is a sea; it is life's shifting, storm-tossed sea. It is not for you to sit on the shore and watch the ships disappear; it is for you to perfect yourself in the art of navigation. As the sailor depends both on the compass and on the stars for his course to harbour, so you shall be guided at the same time by the forces of the earth and by visions beyond the earth.

If you should fail . . . if you should find yourself some day shipwrecked on the shore of evil—do not lie down to rest thinking you have reached your native land. Even should you succeed in hushing the voice of your conscience—as the hunchback succeeds in forgetting his infirmity—you may not be able to bear seeing how people sicken from the poison of your cup. For there was after all a time when you hoped that the liquid it held would bring them health.

But if in defiance you set your course towards the island of evil, if memories of its invigorating fruits invite you to land—then do not forget that they are few who have returned from that voyage more alive than when they set out. More numerous are those who never returned. They stayed and prospered, and ended as—good citizens.

## THE NATURE OF THE DECISION

It may have happened on some scorching summer day, when tormented by thirst in the street, that you have said to yourself: "A glass of sourish wine in a shady spot would be refreshing now." But then the idea of some other drink has suggested itself to your mind, and you have thought, "That might taste even better." You have begun to waver. By and by the desire has left you, and in its place disgust has filled your throat. In the end you have preferred to go on—thirsty.

I do not mean by this that either you or the mass of men make indifferent things into matters of conscience, and that this is the cause of your loathing of life. I mean, rather, that you deal with the hardest decisions of your conscience as lightly and wantonly as you would deal with everyday matters of food and clothing—regardless of the fact that while it is true that life is not as serious as wiseacres may allege, it may easily become serious to those who notwithstanding this do not take it seriously.

First of all, I mean that joy and happiness are to be found only in terms of decision. Decision in the same sense as it has for him who finds himself standing between the railway tracks as a train approaches with the swiftness of the wind. You have to step to the right or to the left—no matter which. It is not only that hesitation fosters disgust; it is your life that is concerned; that purity and clearness are at stake without which life has no value.

You must decide whether you will forgo the dusty comfort of old long-inhabited houses, give up the peace of inanity and the calm that is the heritage of ignorance, or abandon the lust of power and fame that drives others out upon the

battlefield where laurels are to be won; whether you will renounce that selfishness which induces the reserved to shut their door, and that ruthlessness with which the strong put to rout everything that does not suit them; and whether you will make of yourself a prey of impurity, that the contents of the cup of life may be cleansed through you. But first and last you will have to decide if you are willing to take up the struggle against the disease of the age, and if you have strength to survive the poisons of marshes where the streams have stagnated.

It was especially on their way to the *source* that men became subject to hesitation. They laid themselves down to drink from brooks and ditches, reassuring themselves with the thought that, after all, every stream comes from the source. They gave human names to the streams. Or they called them Truth, Reason, God. The soul of humanity has been turned into a shrieking of contentious voices. Here somebody calls out the wisdom of the East, while another who lauds the faith-healers of the West seeks to outyell the first. Mystic vapours rise from the censer while hard-headed rationalists prove the absurdity of mysticism; there is no stupidity but has its prophet, and no foolishness too foolish to gather believers. Out of the qualm we long for release from all the things that, having lost the growing power of life, weigh upon our souls and tear them asunder in doubt. We ask for purification: not in the name of annihilation, but in order that new, healthy saps may arise in the dry trunk of the tree of life.

The time has come for a decision of hitherto unknown scope and moment. Heretofore decisions have spread their effects through centuries, or perhaps millenia, and the matter at issue has always been one god's victory over another. The people of the virgin forests wanted a god whom they could compel through blows and prayers. The martyrs of the arenas wanted a merciful father who would gather them up into his

arms when the lions tore them to pieces. Now the decision concerns a choice between all magical gods, on the one side, and, on the other, the God who is the beginning and the end of the rhythm of death and renewal, as well as its every least inflection. Behind us are tens of thousands of years of contending gods and the division of humanity into sects. Before us lies an endless road of unity and fulfilment of life.

Do not believe that you can evade the decision of the age by a laugh or by half-heartedness or by the arts of compromise. It compels your attention each time the bells chime from a temple, and it confronts you every day in the most diverse circumstances: when you are called upon to console those you love, or to help the sick, or when your child is to be taught about God. If you have not the strength to sacrifice that which has lived out its life, and thus yourself become a road to purification, at least take the step to final decision in one direction or the other. Even the water of the ditch may slake your thirst in an emergency. The most impure of all is he who is for ever filled with the nausea of hesitation.

## THE ROCK IN THE DELUGE

THE deluge has submerged the land. Swollen streams from far and near have overflowed their banks and inundated human consciousness with the slime of the times. Floods of events have gone rushing with furious speed through quiet valleys, tearing along men with them and carrying away their homes, they know not whither.

Seas have risen. Waves of change have reached mountainous heights, and broken their way booming and crashing through all barriers. Heedless of confines where shores once bade them recede they have rolled and thundered on, and cities have vanished. Where once vineyard bordered vineyard the flood has left nothing but devastation.

Few are those who have escaped, who have been tossed about in fragile craft as peal after peal of thunder shook the sky. Fewer still have succeeded in reaching land, and in finding some crevice in the rock for a refuge, where they could remain their own selves; a refuge whence no sucking wave could drag them down into the crimes of the age.

Do not think that you are saved because you have reached the Ararat of decision. You feel strong, you have taken the step which leads from stumbling to certainty, and in your hand you hold the sword on which there are engraven the words, "Never again!" Life has acquired a purpose for you, and you will serve this purpose: you will become a sword in the struggle for spiritual purity, in order that the flood may never rise again. You will become a road to that security on which men may build without fear that roof and walls will be dragged down upon their heads by the powers of uncertainty.

Be on your guard; the waves of destruction rise high, and new floods of death may surge up at any moment, and snatch from you that jewel of life which has become yours, and which is now called your certitude. Do not forget that you were born into the world with those very passions from which the flood derived its power to swell and to destroy.

Perhaps you awaken one morning feeling their forces pressing upon you; and when you look about, you behold but darkness over the waters of doubt; terrified, you find that your hands are empty. And, exhausted as you are, you cannot again become a searching wanderer.

*Faith*—that is the name of the force with which we bid defiance to life's enemies when they reach out greedily for the riches we have won in the great moment of our decision. It is the name of the vigilance with which we watch for all that lurks to tear us away from the rock of reality, down into the flood's damnation.

Your rock is strong because it was not built by human thoughts and according to human calculations. It was built in those holy hours when all that was whirling around in your soul could sink to the bottom and reach the transfiguring spheres of stillness. It grew out of the deep; and as it grew crystal was bound to crystal, and the crystals grew into a mountain; at last the mountain rose out of the sea into the light of day.

If there had remained one layer of the shifting sand of hope how could you feel safe for a single hour? But it was in the blackest hour of hopelessness that your faith grew most steadfast. For then it was cleansed from everything to which men had clung fast, and from which the deluge tore them loose. Did you not hear them curse the delusiveness of hope as they vanished into the depths?

Do not fear, nor lose courage—not even at times when from your rock you survey the world and find nothing but folly, and when ruin seems folly's end and reward. There are others besides yourself who have reached a *living faith*, as the decision cleaved through their souls, separating reality from unreality.

And do not despair when you look down from your rock to find it bare and desolate and inhospitable. Do not speak words of despondency in your heart, saying: "Better if I had been swallowed up with the rest in the stream of events: here I cannot live. How could anything grow and give nourishment in this bleak barrenness?"

There may come a day when the flood, full of shame, subsides, to hide itself in its ancient beds. There may come a day when its expanding islands will meet, and when fertile plains will extend from height to height. And it may be that wandering along the flower-edged paths of those plains you will meet men who are strong and wise in their faith, and in whose proximity you feel once more that life is joy.

## ON THE SUMMIT

At last you have reached the summit on your arduous way to the altar. You give a sigh of relief and look about you. But when your glance falls upon me, it does not express gratitude. It is rather as if you looked at a seducer. Anger and bitterness are in your voice as you say :

“I begin to understand you. You call that merciful God to whom men have appealed in despair a magical god, and you turn your eyes away from him. You want instead an order of grace that is immanent in life, and accessible to every one who has courage to leave the old and to take up the pilgrim staff.

“In *stillness* I am to attune my soul to the great movements of the world, and transfer the centre of gravity from myself to them. When the stillness of the soul passes into *contemplation* all things as well as myself are regenerated thereby; we no longer bear the blurred impress of worldly life; we bear the sanctified seal of eternity. But our contemplation should not be lax and passive; it should be attended by prayer and tension, as though not only our own redemption but also the redemption of the world depended upon its attaining its end; our contemplation must be a *straining* towards the currents of eternity. When it obtains that to which it aspires, it achieves *understanding*, and something begins to stir. Thanks to understanding, not only can we *distinguish* the way that leads to life from the way that leads to death: we can also accept that towards which we strain. But not until the *decision* has been reached does our acceptance become a constructive fact. And the more firmly we *hold fast* to that which we have attained through our decision, the more surely will it carry us through all tribulations up towards the spheres. Have I understood you aright?



“But you forget that grace comes always from above. When you would use the knowledge and the wisdom accumulated in the course of centuries to produce grace forcibly, you have not advanced any farther than the savage who seeks to force his wooden images into obedience by blows and conjurations.

“Infinite in its stillness the sky arches over my head, and its stillness is also mine. But when I lift my eyes to behold the miracle I see the spirit of ecstasy hovering far up and away like migrating swans, and I cannot even hear the rustling of its wings. Like the birds of heaven I strain towards a goal that lives as a longing in the depths of my soul. I would fain soar like the birds. But as they vanish, so does my hopeless yearning vanish also, and I see nothing but empty air. I remain standing where I am, chained to earth. The stillness becomes emptier and more lifeless than was ever the striving of the swarming human crowds.

“What avails all the wisdom by which, during long hours of toil, I learned to discriminate between good and evil? When I look down into the earth where I dug my well, and where I thought I perceived dimly the life-giving currents of the depths, I see but a dismal yawning hole. My heart has dried up, my energy is paralysed, and the gift of discernment is only a burdensome load on the way.

“When you spoke of decision—not decision in life’s multitudinous affairs, but the great and ultimate decision—I believed all burdens would fall from me once it had been reached. That was why I followed you. Like a panther I was to reach with a single leap the work I would wring from life as my prey. But, as you see, I am standing still. My will is as paralysed as my strength, and nothing is further from me than life’s revelry of joy.

“What avails my faith when it cannot take fire and change into flaming ecstasy to warm my heart and irradiate warmth

towards foreign shores? My faith is a fact as dull and empty as other facts. My faith is a marble statue. With soft breasts and sensually quivering limbs it promises release from something that burns and consumes. But, like the marble, it repels me with its impassive cold, saying: 'Open your eyes and see that I am nothing but an image of the beloved for whom you long.'

"You, who tempted me to this journey, have led me astray. In vain I walked by your side, earnestly searching and never sparing myself, finding in humility that for which I searched, and never exalting myself. Step after step I mounted upwards, believing that the stairway was the way of grace to the plenitude of life, and that salvation awaited me at the top. But your way does not lead to purer air and to freedom, nor to the heart's jubilant delight, nor to singing rhythms, nor to salvation—not even to grace.

"Give me back my wilderness with its thickets and its flowers! On the waves of passion I will again seek a dreamy rest, and I will yield to the lure of every glittering vision that rises to the surface of the sunny sea. Without responsibility and without conscience I will follow each tempting fancy.

"But if, wasted with the poison of your own thoughts, you are unable to help me and return to me the happiness I have lost, then the least you can do is to help me on. I cannot remain standing here, in a tension that serves no purpose, and in barren suffering without end. Help me!"

There is no mercy in my words as I answer: "If you have erred, I share your fate in a twofold measure. It was not *a slave begging for mercy*, but *a sacrificing, masterful man* I sought for a companion. The altar is ready with dancing flames. Are you disappointed that the way led thither? Are you not eager

to see streaming down upon you from the open heavens that grace which the man *favoured by the grace of God* experiences when he is consumed in his work? So be it, fall back into your weakness; and when you drown in the deluge none will bemoan you."

## THE DEAD WALLS

WHENCE comes the dead resistance that so often confronts us, blocking the way to life's nascent possibilities? We believe we have reached our goal, and expect the next instant to see the land of our longing outspread before our eyes, and to feel our hearts swelling with that which hovers in the distance. Instead, we find ourselves standing abashed in front of walls that hide even what is nearest—and we do not understand.

Astonished, we ask ourselves: "Are we on the wrong path? Was it not our longing that brought us to this spot? Was this longing of evil—did it drive us away from ourselves? Is the resistance we feel the same as that we felt when the necessity of conquest rose in our way? And is this obstruction nothing but the faintness which seized us each time we stretched out our hands to do what we ought not to do?"

No wonder if we ask thus. For when we stand questioning before the walls, thoughts force themselves upon us from times when awakening desires were beginning to stir, while the claims of humanization restrained us by opposing their *No* from answering. This began as far back as we can remember. What else was education than this constant *no* in our path? And when the education of the schools ended, the education of life began, and in new forms the same *no* sounded in our ears.

Impulses *must* be held in check by resistance and restraint. Our lives are not the lives of savages. The tree that is to bring forth good fruit must be pruned. Under restraint the strong mature to perfection, and only to those who have been restrained by the trammels of inhibitions does there come a moment of which they can say: "This is ours."

As we look for a meaning in education, so we look for a *meaning* also in the dead walls. Has our time not yet come, we ask: are we to be chastised still more? But we look in vain, and in vain do we expect an answer. If that which exalts us now claims us wholly and seeks liberation—if that is a crime, then life itself is a crime. Everything appears so utterly devoid of purpose and consistency. And the walls only rise and rise. . . .

It was not words and admonitions, but events and experiences that guided our education. We burned ourselves not only in the flames of fire—we burned ourselves at other flames as well. The recollection of pain warned us whenever fire attracted us anew; the force which the burning had given to our souls drove us away from the danger of destruction without the intervention of thought. Is it not true that the strongest and most compelling forces in our lives are the residues of experiences which were burnt most indelibly into our consciousness?

But it is not only events which educate and chastise us that determine our fate. Every wave of life that settles and dies becomes a fate. And when we reach out for something that hovers and tempts us on the further side of this fate, then the wave, once a part of life, becomes an obstacle in our path.

The dead walls are built up out of the rocks of disintegrating experiences, and the force of their resistance is the same force that gripped us and lifted us in the most hallowed moments of these experiences. No wonder if we stand silent and abashed and uncomprehending. Who can survey all the roads and paths of life and death in his soul?

How should the painter who has just been thrilled by great delivering visions, and feels his work pour forth in floods of glowing colour, comprehend what takes place when the brush falls from his paralysed hand, and the flood changes into a

dry and stony bed? He says that his inspiration has failed him; and he sees no way out of his despair.

The cold hand that clutched his heart . . . that is the teacher of his youth, who slipped in unawares and now holds him back at the very moment when he is about to lift himself above all he has learned—when he is about to come into his own. He was happy when he found his master, and thankful for the guidance given him when his own hand was yet unable to lead him where he wished to go. The master was a revelation, and the master's way became his own.

But when the scales fell from his eyes, and a new-created world sought in him a new interpreter, he felt the need of cutting loose from his past: and all paths along which his work had been gliding towards definite forms had to be blotted out as if they had never existed. But it is easier to grind a mountain into gravel than to break away from the paths of mechanisation in your soul.

As he tries to fix his new visions upon the canvas he finds that his crayon slips into old habits, as if it were guided not by himself, but by a ghost within him. It does not help him if he *understands* why this happens. The next time the crayon slips again into the customary track. He feels the fatigue of a futile struggle when he collapses at the foot of the dead walls.

He does not lie there alone. Every one of us who has aspired to something, and who has struggled upward from height to height to reach a wider outlook, has lain there like him, and has cursed his quest in moments of despair. He whose task it is to help the sick often finds them lying by dead walls; the sick who want more than they can accomplish, and who destroy themselves in their efforts. And it is the walls that put their strength to the hardest test.

They wanted to build a home of light and peace and happi-

ness; and in the spring of trustful love they did not doubt that this home awaited them in the future. How was it that they could not find each other within the walls of their home as they had found each other in the moonlit nights of summer?

Each time one of them reached out for the other he reached from a greater distance; the home grew around them not in the spirit of union, but in that of the workaday life. Fraught with perplexities, discords and sorrows, the years wore on. They looked upon each other like strangers, embittered in mind, and asking themselves daily how they could have been so mistaken, how all their hopes could have been shattered so utterly. Dead walls. . . .

But they had not been mistaken. They belonged together. It was the cold hand that had slipped in and torn their harmony to pieces. When their home was to be built up, memories revived from the two childhood homes where things had not been as they were to be with them. But the influence of the past was stronger than themselves and their power to build. It sucked them down into the slack waters; and they were once more drawn helplessly into that solitude from which they had emerged, and from which love had released them.

Much buoyant joy is required to restore a tradition to life, and to make a living union grow on the basis of separate memories. If we blind ourselves to difficulties, and relax our grip in remoulding, death overtakes us, and we are driven away from the object of our aspiration—from each other and from the goal of union. And we land at the dead walls.

There is nothing sadder than the fact that even the hand which caressed us most tenderly, which ministered to us with the warmest care, that even this hand can grow cold in the course of life and steal in to grip our hearts when we least suspect it. How many a man has loved and believed in his love, and yet shrunk back when facing the decision, left his beloved

in sorrow, and gone on alone! And in his loneliness he has pondered: "Whence came that cold hand?"

Perhaps he heard a whisper in his ear: "It was better so. She could never have been to you what your mother was." Perhaps the vision of his dead mother came to him, with the halo about her that death bestows. She gave to her son the best that was in her; he accepted it gratefully and remained faithful.

But when he met his own beloved the mother was changed from a bridge of life into a wall, from a giver into a taker. His faithfulness to her did not lead him on towards perfection, but drove him away to pine in loneliness. It was she with the saintly halo who took him from his bride. The cold hand was his mother's hand.

No wonder that those who have fallen paralysed at the foot of the dead walls are seized with despair, and feel despair increase as time wears on without bringing a solution. The resistance that rises in their way comes from the deepest, most ineradicable facts of the past—not living, pliant and filled with all the possibilities of transformation, but stagnant, unseizable.

Did we ever see the Sphinx lift her head higher above the desert sands and gaze with more impassive eyes upon infinitude than when we felt our souls expand with the forces of deliverance—the next moment to be buried beneath the whirling sands of the past?



## THE MEANING OF SACRIFICE

**SACRIFICE** is the act through which we tear out of our breast the obstacles that hinder the breaking forth of the currents of life, and commit them to the flames to be consumed.

Sacrifice is that circuitous route by which we reach, through the will, that which the will sought in vain to reach of itself. We do not wake love by crying out: "I will!" But it is often kindled, as though by magic, when we whisper: "I will sacrifice. I will sacrifice my selfishness, my hardness, and all my extravagant dreams of happiness—I will sacrifice all that stands in the way of love—I will make of my heart an eternal fire of sacrifice."

Sacrifice is the courage to draw a dividing-line, and say: "This belongs to me, for it belonged to me from eternity. But that does not belong to me." It is the courage not to waver, even if father and mother and many desires of the blood vanish on the further side of the dividing-line, never again to be father and mother and the same desires of the blood.

To sacrifice is not to dispossess oneself, still less to possess oneself of a thing. All depends on the spirit in which sacrifice is wrought. Whether we alienate or whether we appropriate, we shall be impoverished unless our heart is moved with the happiness of giving and receiving. To avoid harm, the hand that offers the sacrifice should be gentle and warm.

Sacrifice is the will of the strong to grow stronger, and the will of the weak to go under from their weakness.

Be on your guard against defiance! Sacrifice is the limit of the tension of will between death and the overcoming of death;

defiance drives tension to its height, but easily causes the bow to break. Dead defiance does not promote renewal, but living defiance often brings the gods to their knees.

Sacrifice is the touchstone of us all, and to all that stone is hard as the hardest necessity. It is not the commonplace sources of happiness that we must sacrifice, the greatest resistance to life comes from what we love most. No wonder that men shrink from it. In an effort to escape the cruelty of sacrifice men look for a symbol of sacrifice with which to identify themselves. But he who has tried himself and has become aware of his own way must sacrifice this security also.

Sacrifice is the narrow gate. Often, too often, it leads only into a yawning darkness, and this darkness becomes doubly appalling when we become aware of the inscription above it: "He knew not why." We do not understand our necessity until the waves of life, released through sacrifice, begin to surge freely through our souls.

Fire is the symbol of sacrifice. Like fire, sacrifice is at the same time the best help and the greatest danger. Once let loose, both tend to spread. The forest fire may grow into a conflagration that devastates the country and does not subside so long as there remains anything to be turned into ashes. The same is true of the flame of the heart. A warning voice says: "If I sacrifice this, what then will be left of my life? A smoking heap of ashes." And perhaps we turn upon ourselves, to smother the heart, hoping thus to escape the danger. Our faith is weak. It is easy to believe in annihilation, but hard to believe in the renewal to follow in its track.

Sacrifice is the road of symbol-formation and of clair-obscure. Not until we are strong enough to give up that which obstructs the currents of the deep will they be strong enough to reach us.

Sacrifice is the highroad of humanity to the wonder of

renewal. Without it everything accumulates, and everything that accumulates dies away and becomes—dead walls. And the symbols from which the strongest currents once issued will be the deadeast of all.

It is of no avail to look behind you, to break out into lamentation, and to seek to evade your fate when you stand before the altar. Unless you light the fire your wandering has been in vain, and neither wisdom nor faith will bring you happiness. All things will grow burdensome; and weighed down by the burden, you will sink towards death.

Who is there that could help you? It is *your* courage and *your* will to purity, *your* road and *your* renewal that are concerned. It is of *you* that the world stands in need.

## AS THE SMOKE RISES

SOMETHING strange takes place as the smoke rises from the altar. Our ancestors piled up forests against the slopes, and when the forests burned, the primitive rock-bed crumbled. Not even the most solid walls which death may raise in our paths can withstand the altar fire. They fall and become sand: and the blocked roads lie open.

Much as when friends who have been torn apart and have gone separate ways in bitterness meet again, shake hands, look at each other with moist eyes, look deeper than they ever did before, and ask: "Why did we ever part?"

Thus we listen wonderingly to the rippling flow of life and ask: "Why did we ever part, you and I? You, living yearning of my heart; you, my faith in the future; you, rejuvenating ardour in my blood—we were always friends, *you and I*. Let us again come together as before, and let us together continue on our way towards eternity."

The stillness that was a while ago the stillness of a desert is again filled with life, and descends like a blessing on the heart. As the warmth of the fire envelops us, the cold hand relaxes its grip. That which caressed us again caresses us gently, and that which guided us faithfully guides us again. Everything that once had a meaning is again filled with meaning and significance. All things revive as they partake of the great blessing of stillness.

We try to find a name for the miracle which we witness when the sluices of devotion burst and our brimming happiness begins to heal us. We call it atonement. And this is the miracle of atonement: What we cast down to be destroyed by

fire comes back to us as the smoke rises from the altar, and the heart softens. And when it reaches us the fruits of the great decision fall into our hands.

It does not come as a part of ourselves, tangled in the threads that tangle things into a chaotic self. It was freed when we ourselves became free. And out of its newly won freedom it comes to thank us for its liberation. It comes like a gift, like a being of bounty. It was irreconcilable with our life: but as we conquered ourselves and confirmed our victory with sacrifice, the irreconcilable contrast was dissolved into a new harmony.

The smoke turned downwards, wrapping me in its thick stifling clouds. I wanted to cry out in distress, to curse in wrath, but I could do neither. Then a gust of wind swept over me, purifying the air, and once again in light eddies the smoke rose aloft, and I saw this: it was not *me* that the smoke would smother; it was my selfishness, and my narrow desires, and my pride.

Let us fear nothing, and let us never out of cowardice flee from that which must come to pass. Let us be on our guard lest the walls rise in our way. The higher they rise and the more firmly time is left to cement the blocks together, the harder becomes the sacrifice that awaits us. Let us carefully examine each day, so that we shall not go to rest unreconciled.

And let us begin each morning by lighting the torch of sacrifice, and by its light look searchingly into ourselves. The fire of purification must pass wherever life has gone before. Not until that which smote us hardest, and embittered us most deeply, and drove us most irrevocably into the paths of death—not until this thing meets us, living, out of the rising smoke of sacrifice—not until then are we reconciled with our fate.

## THE COLUMNS ON THE SEA-SHORE

As rare as is the consummation of holiness, so numerous are its altars. Not a tribe has passed without raising them; not a people has settled anywhere without building a temple in its midst.

The abodes of men, the streets and market-places, and monuments commemorating the dead are gone. Gone also are the steps up which strode mighty sovereigns, and the tribunes where laws were made, and the walls and gates against which enemies made assault. The shore where once the city flourished and decayed has grown into a wilderness of weeds and thickets, a breeding-place of pestilence. Only the pillars encircling the altars of Ceres and Neptune rise above this wilderness.

We may well ask why men made their hard life so much harder through centuries of toil. Why did they hew and pile up blocks of marble into forests of columns? And why did they burn on the altars of their gods that which in sweat and thralldom they had wrung from the soil?

Do you believe they did this only to gladden themselves and others with beautiful sights? Or to appease foes whom none could reach with weapons? Neither love of beauty nor fear of physical death can enable our energies to strain beyond the limits of human weakness; nothing can do this but the dread of a life that is no life—nothing but the horror of spiritual death.

They wanted to live, and they had to live. But, like everything they saw and heard, they themselves disappeared amidst the dead forces of nature and dwindled into nothingness

among them. They reached out for human life beyond all dead things; it eluded them; they did not attain it, so they strained for goals which they had visualised and cried out in despair. In answer, the mighty pillars rose out of the ground. These remained standing as symbols to carry on their prayer from generation to generation, down through the ages.

When the beasts of sacrifice fell moaning at the base of the altar and uttered their last cry; when the blood spurted in vigorous jets over the priests, and the shuddering masses mumbled the names of their gods; when the smoke rose thickly and, saturated with the rank smell of burning, rolled in heavy clouds between grimed pillars to spread over the city, that everyone might pause in his pursuits and turn his thought towards the temple—

Then the miracle happened: treated as a human being for whose benefit and in whose honour one sacrifices the dearest thing he owns, nature changed and took on human features. It seemed no longer *as though* the sea had life: but the yearning and the tumultuous joy which the sea-god knew ere the keels of mortals had ever been rocked by his waves grew in all men's souls into Dionysian frenzy.

As the altar's flame sank low, death relaxed its hold on nature. Men lifted their eyes and beheld the earth alive as they themselves were alive. They heard distant voices in the beating of the waves on the shore, and the winds of the east and the west became gentle, caressing hands.

Power and glory are gone. Not only the palaces, but even the commands of the rulers have vanished. Not only the tribunes, but even the laws have been demolished. Nothing is left but that life which the people, through their sacrifice, set free in the soul of humanity—nothing but the force that redeemed . . .

Not because their stones were harder than other stones did their temples remain standing, defying time that levelled cities to the ground. Like everything else, these would long since have crumbled into dust had not life's grimmest necessity taken shape in them. As the people *had to* rear them, so they *had to* remain standing and bear witness, saying: "If the world loses its human life, man will lose his."



## THE CITY OF SACRIFICE

STROLLING in the woods of northern countries you will often find cultivated tracts on the shores of lakes whose names include the word *vi*.<sup>1</sup> There you should linger, remembering that these places were once sacred, and that the ancients had altars there on which they offered sacrifice. Never mind if you do not understand their rites, and do not exalt yourself and call them meaningless. Too often you yourself will find that no one understands what comes from the inmost depths of your heart, and that others call folly what to you has profound significance.

The ancient city whose turrets and encircling wall emerge from the sea where the roads from east and west met in times past, even to-day bears the name of the "City of Sacrifice."<sup>2</sup> Where the greatest riches were massed together the greatest sacrifices should be brought. That was the ancient custom. . . .

If you would win a friend for life, just wend your way some moonlit night through the alleys of the sleeping city to the ruins of St. Lawrence. In one of the quaint passages from which you look through rounded arches into the vaulted dusk you will encounter the youth who was burned on the grid because he reviled his worldly master and sent the sick to him for care, instead of treasures to be squandered in sin.

When he has led you down the narrow stairs he will look into your eyes and ask inquiringly: "Do you know what befell me when the red-hot bars of the grid burnt into my flesh? I can tell you, for it was revealed to me in a vision. I saw the

<sup>1</sup> *Vi* means "sacrifice."

<sup>2</sup> The writer here refers to the ancient city of Visby (by = city) situated on the Isle of Gotland off the Swedish coast.

heavy crushing blocks of life begin to move; they rose and were transformed into a vault, and life began to arch over man as the sky arches over the earth.

“Men took heart and beamed with relief. I would have cried out with delight at the revelation, but I checked even this last desire lest my guards think I cried with pain. What was this pain compared to that I had known when night after night and year after year I lay burning upon the grid of earthly passions?

“See how beautifully, how wondrously, like a closed universe, the vault springs from its walls, without beginning and without end, and without striving towards anything that it is not in itself. Life will be like that some day. As surely as it will never again be the crushing burden of earth it was in pagan times, so surely will it lift itself higher and higher.

“But be still—for it is only out of the profound stillness of the heart and mind that life can grow. Although I love the sun I dare not let its dancing rays fall into the darkness lest the light carry with it some troubling picture. It is better to wrest from the heart even that which we cherish most dearly than to disturb it while the mystery is growing out of its depths.

“You also shall become an altar. Fear not—I do not mean to say that the altar which your fate builds up will resemble the grid that was forged by mine. Something good and sweet may await you. It is not things like these that matter. Only one thing matters: that neither indolence nor the desire to please make you falter when the world-fate whispers in your ear: ‘The time for *your* sacrifice has come.’

“Do not fear even if the bed of pain should be prepared for you. You are not alone. All who have fought the battle of faith and holiness like yourself are with you. We shall stand

by you. For the vault that shall arch over the life of man does not rise of itself. Without our help, humanity's abode cannot come nearer the vault that was built when the heavens were made. Wings do not grow of themselves out of the soul of man that it may mount thither whence the Holy Spirit descended to earth in the form of a dove. We must all work and struggle and help one another."

He is silent; and in silence I follow his glance as it comes to rest on the altar. A timorous ray of moonlight that has found its way through a crevice in the wall quivers on the cup of life. Oh, that it must always be filled to the brim with suffering for those who wish the happiness of mankind! Woe to the unrighteous through whom the world would perish, if the righteous failed to bear witness! They bear witness even when their walls crumble.

Night is at an end, and the morning sunshine floods the city with a sea of golden light. As if it loved St. Catherine most of all, it showers upon her its abundant gifts. It gleams and glitters where the ivy clings to ruined walls and vaultings; and its rays stream playfully down upon the earth where once the saint trod lightly.

She has not forsaken the temple of which human wickedness has left but shattered fragments. She is a perpetual smile of the heart, and her feet scarcely touch the ground as she hastens to meet you. Without asking why, your eyes, too, turn to the sky whither her own are always lifted. And you strain your ears as if you expected to hear the fullness of wisdom from child lips that can only pray.

"Look," she whispers, "do you see that vault, left throughout the ages as it was when the disciples of St. Francis laid stone upon stone? Can you see that a broken arch still points upward although the hand that spanned it is no more? It

taught me to point heavenwards when it burst, and to show man the way thither.

"I am so happy. You could not believe what happiness is mine. My soul strained higher and higher. I was impatient to see the vault over-arching human life touch the sky. The miracle came to pass when my heart burst with the tension of heavenly longing. Then the Saviour took the broken heart in His hands, and as their warmth enfolded its throbbing unrest it ceased to bleed.

"Do not believe the fools who say that you must not strain too high lest you be broken. When I lifted the head of the decapitated criminal and kissed it, that through my blessing the gates of Paradise might open to him, it was as if the veil of the temple had been rent in twain as it was rent when the Crucified breathed His last. As when a concealing curtain drops, the whole world disappeared in the hour of my sacrifice, and I saw the glories of heaven revealed. I was dazzled with the light—I became a harmony among harmonies."

The bells are chiming now, and the saint is gone. Perhaps she hastened forth to help the sick and suffering; perhaps I shall find her again in the market-place, where in the shadow of her shrine people have begun to swarm and barter earthly things.

It is growing dark and in the twilight walls and pillars rise to dizzy heights from the ground where St. Nicholas still speaks amidst the wreckage of time. Press as they may against all that is left, the assailing winds cannot move the heavy blocks nor hush the saintly voice.

As if he would test the strength of my lungs he takes me up the winding stairs to the pinnacle of his temple and out into the storm. It is to me, then, as though the whole world were

submerged and annihilated in the billowing sea of the ages. But for the last glow of the evening sky in smouldering clouds I should have thought all things engulfed in chaos. But like a breast that defies anguish when it tries to burst its frame, the temple gable rises out of the darkness heedless of the storm.

“Do you see the light?” the saint asks, as the lashing winds seek to tear the cloak from his body. “Do you see the light that flashes forth into the night from the precious stones in the gable front to lead the seafarers on? Do you not shudder at the thought of all the wreckage left on the shore to-morrow, should that light grow dim?”

“The miracle of my life occurred when I brought my sacrifice. For then it was that I became self-luminous as the precious stones of the gable are self-luminous. And I could aid mankind as I had longed to do.

“Warningly men cry to him who walks alone: ‘You will consume yourself, you will perish on your solitary path; you will come to naught in your striving to be everything! Come hither, fulfil the duties of the day, be one of us, and you will be useful to those who belong to you as we are useful to those who belong to us.’

“Do not heed their tempting voices. He who shuns the pain of self-immolation, he who in the fateful hour of night clings to the sinking ship in which men seek to save the things they have acquired, he who chooses the suitable instead of seeking the eternal, will never be self-luminous.

“Soon the last afterglow of the day will die away, and all things will become invisible. Without the self-luminous the world would be a roaring of waves in endless darkness and a driving of winds through a night that knows no dawn.

See—see how the stones sparkle the more wonderfully as the darkness increases!”

If the daylight should have vanished when you leave the City of Sacrifice to glide across the sea, do not forget to look for the gleaming stones on the temple gable. And do not forget what the saints have taught you—that with their help your heart may some day shine like theirs.

## AN EVENING WITH THE SAINT

OH, Francis, that I should come to feel beneath my feet the hard rock that was your bed—that bed whereon you slept at one with nature; that I should come to delight in the cooling shade of your trees and be enveloped by the vapours from your soil—you who had the spirit of sacrifice like none other! That it should be granted to me to meet you at your altar. . . .

Two men were digging in the garden. I watched them through the loophole in the lowly cloister. The sun shone on their shaven crowns, and with as much care as if they had been printing Biblical texts on parchment they cut with their spades each bit of turf they turned. Suddenly it dawned upon me that one, the smaller one—the one with the little scraggy beard—was you. I was frightened, and my hand went to my heart; it was beating hard.

Yonder—far off on the other side of the garden wall—blue mountains rose against the golden background of the sky. It was very still. As if the light of the spheres was being poured down to fill earth's cup with a fiery draught, so lay the valley brimming with gleaming hues; the city where you built your temple vanished as a mirage, and as mirages fade away and vanish, so vanished the paths where you had wandered. No birds could have sung thus by themselves; it was you who taught them to sing so that every note thrilled the heart.

I would hasten forth to throw myself at your feet to pray: "Oh, Francis, let me tarry here. For your spade I shall willingly exchange all that life has in store for me of selfish joy. The gate in your garden-wall is the gate of Paradise; dead and frustrated is the world to which it leads. But in your presence all is life. Who would have dreamed that any human spirit could release

the earth from its disguise of matter as you have done and change it into ineffable glory?

“Forgive me for not always understanding you. Forgive me for thinking: wondrous and beautiful though the light was that shone about you and the Holy Clara as you ate your bread and drank your wine together—shone so brightly that people thought the house was aflame—it would have been better still if a home had grown up about you, shining as brightly with the holy joy of duality in union.

“Forgive me, Francis; I am ashamed of my simplicity. I understand now that you had to live in solitude with heaven and earth in order that you and heaven and earth and everything that is should come nearer redemption. I understand your sacrifice. In order that paradise should become paradise, woman could be but a passing guest of the hour in your life on earth.

“Let me stay with you. I will be as the disciple who lifted his hand to his eyes when you lifted yours, and who bent to kiss a flower when you bent to kiss one. Be assured that my hands will bleed as yours bled, not because I love the Crucified as you loved Him, but because I love you for your devotion’s sake.

“There is no hesitation and no dead wall in you. In love unbounded you overflow—you wondrous cup of life! And as you grow your humility grows. Never in my search along the ways of holiness shall I reach an altar so radiant with the miracle of reconciliation as is the altar into which you changed this bit of the earth.”

But before I had time to move I heard someone speak. I turned and saw one of the cloister brethren. I do not recall what he said, but when I looked again through the embrasure



you and your disciple were gone. The garden was empty. The light of the sun had gone out. The birds were still. The gate in the wall awaited me. And on the other side of it, the world.

At dusk, as I went down the steep path where I had come in search of your abode, I became aware that you walked beside me—but no, it was not your living presence, it was your ghost. I spoke, nevertheless, hoping to be understood:

“Forgive me once again, Francis; forgive me that I grew weak in your presence, and that my weakness made of you the most dangerous tempter in my life; you will still remain my friend—will you not?”

“That world in which you lived your life is not my world, your work is not my work, nor is your home my home; and, first and last, your sacrifice is not my sacrifice. Never would your presence have brought me redemption. You were an *instrument of holiness*. But your paradise would have numbed my powers into an *empty gesture of holiness*.”

## THE SACRIFICIAL COURAGE OF THE VANQUISHED

MEPHISTO laughs, and his laughter is hard and scornful: "You let thoughts steal forward like the shadows of guileless children. You seem to think I cannot find you out. You want to solve the problem of orientation, and surprise those who suspect nothing with the fact that you have solved it. But do not imagine that you will succeed. There is none can tiptoe so softly through the labyrinth of unsolved problems that he evades death—the all-conquering.

"You know that neither will nor reason furnishes a point where God and man can meet and become friends. You think that sacrifice may be that point; you think that in sacrifice there is none of that imperious will, none of that condescension which is the most dangerous enemy of friendship.

"You think you grip life on the other side of all dead things when you mention the word 'sacrifice.' Sacrifice is the summit on the road of life where it goes winding on from stillness as a beginning towards atonement as an end. Does God, too, rise out of the stillness, and do you think you can comprehend His nature when you comprehend the nature of atonement?

"When you discourse so admirably on the heroes of sacrifice, it is not only because you love them for the men and women they were; you love them because, with their sacrifice, they created that world-substance of which you receive a share in your turn—or *believe* you receive your share, since you believe you are favoured by the grace of God.

"Nothing but illusion: As you scoffed at 'the strong in faith,' you, too, shall be derided, because of your faith. You

are both in error. You will not admit death as the one imperturbable fact of existence; the death of the heart—the death of the universe—the death of God.

“Before your thought takes form I tear away its foundation. Sacrifice! There is no sacrifice. The sick stomach talks of sacrifice when it abstains from the pleasures of the table; and when people whose land is overrun by foes are forced to relinquish their own rapacity, they lift their eyes skywards and say they are making sacrifice. But when did you see the hale and hearty sacrifice desire, or the strong sacrifice their love of power?

“Sacrifice—that is the futile effort of the vanquished to spread the mantle of grandeur and magnanimity over defeat. The dead walls from which sacrifice is to save you are the world and ourselves. We are all vanquished. Sacrifice is not the summit of the road of life; it is the climax of lying and hypocrisy. When the smoke rises even decency is stifled. . . .”

Mephisto is silent. His laughter dies away and gloom descends. But out of the gloom there comes a tentative answer: “Must you always uproot the tenderest shoots of life and change thoughts that are thirsty for life into a rattle of dead bones. . . .?”

“You are right. We are all vanquished by dead passions, by a heredity impossible to overcome, and by the sordid things of the world. But did you never see *the sacrificial courage of the vanquished*? Did you never understand that the question as to whether or no the martyr shall live as a symbol of eternity is decided only in the hour when the flames rise from the faggots and envelop his body?

“Do you know what it means to have been vanquished utterly and still to accept life; to accept it not as a challenge and a thirst for revenge and a hope of victory in a distant

future, but to accept it in gratitude and humility; to accept it out of longing to liberate others; to accept it as—an act of sacrifice?

“No—you do not know this. And, therefore, atonement will always seem folly to you. And your world will never be other than a shell containing emptiness and the play of dead forces.”

## THE HAPPINESS OF TRAGEDY AND THE SOLACE OF DEFEAT

DURING the days and nights and seasons when it has seemed to me that I could not endure another hour I have looked about me for something that might bring relief. As in a hazy distance I have seen men engaged in their pursuits; I have seen their petty troubles and their pitiful joys, and I have asked myself: "If I could exchange my own life for something of this, for what would I exchange the grandeur of tragic destruction?"—"For none of it."

As in all other growth, there is happiness in the growth of destruction when it grows beyond human limits and kills human vanity.

To be racked with anguish, to wrestle without wearying in your quest of a means by which to prevail over a tragic fate, and yet to be ground to nothing between all that is hard and petrified, between the instincts of nature in your body and the cruelty of men in your environment—that is to be prostrated by defeat.

But if you do not relinquish your struggle and your searching there will come, along with the prostration, a sense of the stupendous forces at the hands of which you are annihilated. We become as nothing, and we ask in humility: "What am I that of all men I should be saved?"

And in this feeling there is solace.

## WORK AS AN ALTAR

NEVER let yourself be baffled by the disbelief of others, or by words of negation, lest your work be stunted, and, looking back some day upon your life, you may have to say: "It might have been!" Words make man a destiny, but action makes him free—makes him a god.

The artist knows it. He drags to the altar of creation what he saw in his night's dreams, and what he heard when his heart made confession—the best his father and mother gave him, and the blood that dropped from his deepest wound. Like a star, revelation stands scintillating in his sky, guiding him on.

The fire of inspiration—that is, the altar-fire. The fire must sweep over multiplicity for the sake of achieving unity; over all unessential things to give life to the one essential thing; over corruption that the symbol may rise in the glory of incorruption. He who is seized by the fire is no longer the man that he was; he is merged in a life beyond the limits of his earthly self. As the smoke rises, he raises himself, reconciled, from the abjection of pain and toil, the work he was called to achieve in his hand. It came from eternity, and it returns to eternity. He may perish, but never that which was materialised in the flames in his hour of sacrifice.

But if the creative man slackens in his recipient attitude and begins to cavil at that which is greater than himself, or if, abashed by cavilling friends, he flags in his faith in revelation, then he extinguishes the fire, and where the quickening smile of his work should have welcomed him he beholds but a grinning mask. That which sought him in quest of its freedom, but was baffled in its quest, turns into evil and becomes a

wasting malady in his heart. In mastery is renewal, but cavilling is the choicest tool of the spirit of negation.

Not only beauty aspires to freedom and cries for help: righteousness aspires to it, wisdom also; everything that is living or that has been visualised by the living when the walls of death crumbled in moments of divine grace. Not all are born with the gift of the hand, nor with the perception of the creator work; but from the start there lies dormant in all of us the secret of *listening*, and in rousing and developing this faculty we may all become helpers of life.

It matters little whether temples of beauty shall grow up around your altar, or laws for the people, or schools of wisdom. Outward things do not count. Rulers have disappeared, leaving but a stain of blood on the page of history. But often deliverance came from one human destiny that vanished as quietly as it had come, leaving behind it nothing but the fact of destiny.

The great, the essential creation, the one accessible to all, is not a thing to be purchased for money or called by name; it is the individual himself. As form lies slumbering in the block of marble severed from the rock, as the individual slumbers in every embryo severed from woman's body, so it slumbers in you. May no day pass by on which your chisel does not detach formless masses of folly and bitterness, on which lines are not softened and blank features filled with living faith.

The one thing essential is for you to be willing to forgo earthly advantages for the work to which your heart draws you; to be willing to avoid the atmosphere in which you stifle, and not to weary until you have found the atmosphere in which you can live—not to shrink back when you are called a fool, and when even those who love you most look at you in wonder, unable to understand; to let yourself be warned

by anguish and reach deeper and deeper into your soul to attain purer and ever purer well-springs. Then it may chance that through silent and steadfast struggle you will grow into a pattern and a help for many.

If not—no matter. We do not offer sacrifice for our own good, nor for visible things, nor for things that are. Reconciliation does not come to us out of our own selves, nor out of the world. Unfathomable is the depth from which it comes; unfathomable must our devotion be, that, sacrificing, we may be swallowed up by it—and rise again from out of it.



## STRENGTHENING ALTAR WORDS

“You shall forgive your enemies!”—what a small and petty command when we remember that life compels us daily to help our enemies gain strength to strike us still harder! The dead wall which hatred tries to raise around us while under the necessity of helping does not yield to sentimental exhortations. It yields only when we have come so far in the holy will to sacrifice that we no longer look for a meaning in the sacrifices that life imposes on us.

Be on your guard lest you cause humiliation by your sacrifice. If in sacrificing you seem to say: “I am the richer, I am the stronger, I have the strength and magnanimity to sacrifice, so that I may be able to give”—then you will only work harm. For the serpents bred in the morass of humiliation are more venomous than the worst extremity.

“I am ready to sacrifice everything to gain peace,” I heard somebody say, “but I do not know what to sacrifice.” I replied: “First of all you must sacrifice that ‘to gain.’ For to believe that anyone can enforce the obedience of infinitude by any deliberate action of his will—that is truly presumption. The man who catches a woman in the street ‘to gain’ gratification of his appetite leaves her bed unsatisfied. Nothing but the overflowing of the spirit of union into pleasure makes the body free. And only those sacrifices will redeem which are wrought by an overbrimming heart, without any selfish design to obtain the privilege of redemption.”

On a lonely path I met a lonely woman who said: “I have sacrificed everything: those nearest to me for my lover; him for the woman he desired; my energy for indifferent things; and my peace of mind for my purity. These sacrifices have

charred my soul, and never did I feel the warmth of reconciliation, nor did I see its light shine over my way." I replied: "Something great and wonderful has happened to you, and you have not seen it; that is the reason. You have not understood that sacrifice—the great, the crucial sacrifice that alone redeems—is made in the moment we become aware that that which happens to us is more essential than that which we do; and when we strain our forces to the uttermost limit that something great may happen through us." The lonely woman continued on her lonely path.

## WHOLENESS—HOLINESS

ROSE-GARDENS bloom where once the land lay buried under mountains of ice. Like sacrificial wreaths of atonement, creepers twine over rocks that have survived the travail of millions of years. The earth that lay barren while untold ages passed over its face has become a symbol of transfiguration.

As the earth has changed, mankind shall change in the course of millions of years.

There shall come a day when the sun will lift itself and pour floods of golden light over the world in answer to agonised questioning. And as the deluge once spread over the face of the earth, so the swelling flood of the deeps shall spread, and nothing shall withstand its warming waves.

May the hour of transfiguration not pass too swiftly, and may man after it has passed never again become what he was before. May the rock of transfiguration remain firm and inaccessible like the rock in the deluge; and may the world, once saved, never more be swallowed up by the grinding forces of events.

The hour of transfiguration—that is, the hour when man out of *wholeness* rises to *holiness*—when man becomes radiant, as all space is radiant, as the day approaches the meridian; when he grows warm and warming like the source whence the currents of the deeps burst into life, and out of which they find a way to all that is frozen.

Wholeness is not the work of your brain. If the brain could engrave the orbits of the world on the tablet of the soul, it would not bring you one perceptible step nearer wholeness.

You cannot hope to reach it until, healed of the lure of delusion, you feel the heart of the world throbbing in your breast.

Nor do you attain wholeness along ways where your spirit looks for power. Could you become a ruler who curbed the world to his will of conquest, and consolidated peace in wisdom, you would yet feel wholeness slip through your fingers. Wholeness comes only to him who has been healed from the last illusion of power, and who can say: "I need neither success nor weapons nor laws to become an instrument of renewal."

And holiness is not a glance turned upward for redemption to come in human shape among the clouds. Holiness is a hand that never wearies, and out of which there streams renewal—whether it be laid upon the forehead of the obdurate or touch inert things.

Nor is holiness a tear that falls from a grieving heart perceiving which the wicked become good and the armed lay down their arms. Holiness is a heart that conquers without tears, and whose fullness none perceives—least of all those who drink renewal from its never-failing love.

When will he come, the one who shall separate life and death, and who shall become the absolute master of life as he has been the absolute victim of death—he for whom not only work and home are altars, but the world, humanity, everything; he who shall pass consuming through the dead remnants of the ages and all that exists, and who shall carry humanity onward so that nothing dead remains where he has passed?

He—why should holiness be confined to a single human being who suffers and creates, as though *human individuals* were a means better than other means? It may be holiness will come this time in the guise of a *people* that has found itself in victorious power, and is willing to be worthy of its happiness! Or it may choose for its manifestation a *multitude of men* who

have drained the cup of suffering to the dregs, and for whom the portals of heaven have been opened through the "sacrificial courage of the vanquished."

Or holiness may come stealing through closed doors in the form of a *movement*, of which none can tell when it began nor whence it came. Perhaps it is already in our midst as a tremor of the heart—so faint and timid that even the keenest listeners can only catch the vague ripple announcing its arrival. Is the movement to grow and overwhelm us all before we realise what has happened? Let us not block its path through lack of understanding!

When men's faces brighten; when, looking at one another, men perceive that they are no longer strangers to one another—then we shall know that holiness has come; then the work of humanity will no longer perish and decay. Filled with eternity, it will grow strong and reach up to the light that shines from the mount of transfiguration. The life that mortal man, in vain, sought to attain in the struggle of all against all will fall like ripening fruit from the tree of communion.

When that hour comes, all things that glow will glow with gratitude.

## **PART III**

# **COMMUNION AND THE COMMUNITY**



## WHEN NO PATHS REMAIN

As I walked citywards early in the morning through drifts of snow I met a man who called out from his sleigh: "Glorious winter weather! But the roads are gone!" He disappeared amidst the tall trunks of the fir-trees, and the whirling snow-flakes covered up his tracks. Through the falling snow I struggled on towards my goal. . . .

Citywards. Oh, this city, where all styles wage war on one another, and where all that the earth has produced seems to be heaped together to boast of the nothingness of all things! Among the naked rocks and gnarled trees of primeval nature it rises into view with its spectacular buildings, parks, and factories, a symbol of this world in which the spirit of communion is lost, in which men have become whirling atoms in the struggle of all against all.

As a warning symbol and a consuming question . . .

There have been noble men who strove for the good of all, and who consumed themselves, body and soul, on the altar of their country. There have been hearts that trembled and eyes that grew moist every day at the sight of suffering and confusion. Why—why then has the community been unable to grow as the strong tree grows, unfolding its crown more luxuriantly and beautifully with every passing summer—to grow strong as man grows strong in the perfection of life on the rock of faith, and as he expands in beneficent harmony among those that surround him? Why have all tracks been covered up by evil and its destructive impulses? Why have all paths vanished?

The path of action? You are thrown into the social body



to be exploited on behalf of things you do not love and a task you do not understand. Who cares about your aspirations and the purpose of your life? You must serve your arch-enemy; and every day you must suffer the humiliation of being held good for nothing—not even to be exploited.

If you were strong, and possessed all possible gifts; if it were in your power to rise up and say: "I am not born to be exploited but to *give*; I will give shape to the yearning of my soul in this wretched world, and I will offer something of my freedom even to the most ungrateful . . ." what would it avail? You would not uplift the world towards spheres of beauty; you yourself would plunge down into the ugliness you wished to destroy. Did you ever see anyone mingle with impunity with the chaos of conflicting wills and the all-corrupting masses, which are what they were ten thousand years ago?

The path of power? Did not those who went farthest along this path face at last the same thing—the hatred of those they would call their friends, and the scorn of those they loved most? Whatever was still human in their souls revolted against the inhumanity of power and turned away from it in disgust. Whatever was still human . . . But how often did anything human survive in the struggle for power? If the last human vestige had not perished before, it vanished and came to naught in the jubilation of victory. On the height of power, illumined by the glamour of power, every victor changed into an idol of stone; the burning question froze on his lips: "Why—why must humanity go astray on the path of power? And why must humanity's progression along this path prove a retrogression?"

The path of sacrifice? This is the worst of all: even the path of sacrifice has been effaced. Just as love is the feeling of union and communion, so is sacrifice the act of union and communion. Where there is no communion there is no way

of atonement. Every sacrifice is doomed in advance to be made in vain.

When did you ever see society rise before your eyes as a being higher than yourself, and higher than all the others who are part of it? When did you see this higher being, glowing with life, take you to itself in reward for the sacrifice you offered in self-abnegation? When you reached out for this being for which your ancestors died, and without which you could not live a single day of your life, did it show you the way to yourself, to atonement, and to a fulfilment of life? Did you not, instead, always run against a wall of strife, lying, hatred, and pain? And when, nevertheless, you tore the heart out of your breast and cried: "I will belong to you; I will share your unhappiness; and I will make my own burden that which oppresses you!" did you not then bleed in vain for your faith? And were you not silenced in your worship?

The path of contemplation? It is worse than the worst that whosoever treads this path strays into a desert where not a single star shines to teach him to tell north from south. The man who withdraws from the crowd and from the noise of daily life, to reach the paradise of stillness and the wonder of renewal beyond all that has fallen asunder, only sinks deeper and deeper into the things from which he would escape, and which he wished to conquer. Society pursues him, and its incoherence assumes appalling forms. Out of all the darkness and all the hidden corners of the past evil forces come stealing, and there is no time too remote to wound a sensitive heart. We must suffer not only for the death of union and communion in the present, but also for all the crimes which have killed them in the course of time. We grow together with all things; we are offshoots of the tree of life, and the sap that is poisonous spreads its poison through us also.

Again and again I have rushed forth to cry out my heart's

loneliness to the night, to the forest and the desolate shores. From afar the roar and tumult reached me as though the city yonder puffed and groaned like one asleep whom anguish and visions of hell pursue even in his dreams. Alas, alas, the many, the thousands and thousands over there! In their heart of hearts they are all as removed from each other and as far from helping each other to reconciliation as are the insane that live crowded together within the same walls. They are for ever straying about on those uninhabited islands in the ocean of the universe which they call their "selves."

And yet—whenever, late at night, moving farther and farther away from the city, I reach the road leading to my home and see the stars shining in sacred solemnity over the silence of white forests and white fields, there is a glow of fire in the sky to the north. It does not flicker like the northern lights nor has it the silver shimmer that fills space at the approach of the moon. The city yonder sinks ever deeper into sleep, and it seems as though, transfigured, it would send a greeting to far-off worlds. The great silence makes me hope again. . . .

Or is this glow, cast into space and bearing witness of the earth's humanisation, to die out ere the searchers find each other—ere communion is achieved, and life has been given a meaning? Is darkness to prevail? And is the earth in this darkness to traverse an icy desolation—endlessly, restlessly seeking its path where no paths are?

## THE PRIMAL IMPULSE

THERE is no help for it: we may hate this society, so unable to satisfy even our craving for beauty and harmony, and so utterly unfit to absorb the forces that ferment in our soul—we may flee from it as much as we like, yet we are constantly forced back, and as soon as we think ourselves free and far removed from it, we are once more entangled in it. We may be aware of its laws as of dead walls, and feel the State to be a prison: it does not matter—if we cannot live in and through society, we must perish in and through it. If we cannot consume ourselves in its midst, irradiating light and warmth to others, we must be burned to ashes there, to the good of none and to our own damnation. What is this strange current of the depths, so rapid that nothing can resist its force?

What moves the child just severed from the mother body to scream and beat the air with its arms? Nothing can soothe it, and its distress does not subside until it is again wrapt in the warmth of motherliness. It is not hunger, nor love, nor the sexual instinct, nor the instinctive need of activity; it is something that lies beyond all other instincts—it is the primal instinct, the need of union. When the separation took place—when the union with the mother body that nourished and warmed it and satisfied all its desires ceased as a *fact*—it was born anew as an *instinctive need*. And the birth of this instinct proved an experience which sought to dominate life's multiplicity.

The primal instinct disintegrates and the instinctive life stereotypes in fixed grooves. No longer nourished by the wonder of union as it was in the mother's womb, the newborn child becomes a prey to hunger, and seeks the breast

with its suckling lips. No longer at one with life, but cast out into solitude, it learns to know the urge for fusion with another, and it begins to yearn for a being it may love. No longer omnipotent, like one whose desire is realised the moment it awakens, it becomes possessed of the instinct to action, and cannot leave anything untried.

Oh, this child that is destined to search and to wander through the coldness of the world—how often will it clutch the empty air as it did in the first hour of its life! As its entrails screamed with hunger, its withered soul will cry out in distress; and when it opens its arms with smiling welcome to the beloved, they will embrace a phantom. The most exquisite things will lose their lustre and become worthless in its hands. And as millions of others have done in all times, it will cry out to the twinkling stars on lonely nights: "Why—why was I born with desires that cannot be satisfied in the world where I must live?"

There is no gratification of the instincts for him who does not seek the primal instinct beneath them all, beyond all that is merely accidental. Only he who reaches the original source of the instincts, and who can draw from its strong flow, will feel his longing stilled and his desire satisfied. The others are doomed to be lashed by their instincts on and on through fire and cold, and to die as helpless as they were born.

Hunger drives us not only to put the spade to earth; it impels us to enter into a thousand relations with others who are doomed to struggle with the earth like ourselves. The hungry animal falls asleep sated, as soon as its maw is stuffed with fodder. But hungry man, who worships the earth, eats his bread in holy communion with it, and with those in whose company, in strife and toil, he must wrest from the earth its nourishing strength. Where the unifying sense of earth bondage is lost, a gnawing dissatisfaction steals in, a sense of isolation. We do not know whence it comes.

As the weak in spirit are carried away by every conceivable notion, and are ever on the look-out for tempting illusions, so the weak in desire are attracted to every woman whose odour intoxicates them. Disillusion follows in their wake wherever they go. They leave the harlot's bed disgusted, and rise empty and stupefied from the bed of their habitual mate. But as great waves are raised only by a great storm, so the strong in desire are moved only by forces that rise out of the depths of communion. From every bath of passion they rise reborn—ready to embrace humanity. And if, by some adversity of fate, they should be cast into self-negation, sin itself becomes for them a road to communion; when with their fellow-sinners they are sucked down into the world of shame and crime, where all alike are drowning and grasping at each other, they soften in humility, and humility deepens their souls and fills them with the weal and woe of common feeling.

The weak man contents himself with every activity that pays; and even when successful, and with a great career in sight, he is carried from one thing to another, and is satisfied provided his bank account increases. But the strong man puts himself to the test, and scorns every activity that is not in accord with his nature. And even if his work inspires him with energy and joy, and proves a blessing to many others, it does not satisfy him entirely. A feeling of dissatisfaction stirs within his soul, and no amount of success can relieve him of the necessity of searching. What is it he wants? What is it he seeks? What is it holds him in suspense? It is the primal instinct that makes itself felt behind the instinct of activity. Through his work he must achieve union between himself and mankind, and between man and man. Only then is his task completed.

The weak man who allows nothing to check his weakness slips insensibly farther down the deadly steeps of disintegration and mechanisation. Instincts disintegrate into sensations and crystallise into interests. Everywhere there lurks the disgust

of meaningless pleasures. His solitude is neither that of the wise man retired within himself nor that of the spiritual aristocrat who draws boundaries about his world. But the strong man, pursuing the arduous path of ascent, reaches the last height, the mystery of mysteries. For above instinct there hovers always mystery. And above the primal instinct there hovers the mystery of mysteries.

Who can understand the deliverance from all that urges, harasses, and fetters, even in its simplest form? Who can understand what happens when a man sinks into the embrace of a desired woman, and the furious waves of the blood subside and all grows still, as the sea grows still after the storm? Who understands the grace and the mercy of the forces that release us from the power of the instinct? Who understands the mystery?

And who can understand what happens when the last tension relaxes, and all becomes rest and fulfilment in perfect and radiant harmony? In the soul there remains nothing that is dead; no longing for things other than those we hold in our hands. There is nothing dead in our life with others, no hatred towards the many to whom we are bound in a common destiny. All laws acquire a living meaning, and society as a whole becomes a force that leads us on towards the highest. We stand free as individuals among individuals, as humans among humans.

It is not true that "the kingdom of God is within you." The kingdom of God is in the harmony between that which is without us and that which is within us.

The kingdom of God has its roots in the primal impulse. It unfolds its crown under the sky of the sacrificing heart. He who rests in its shade rests in the mystery of atonement.

## THE HOME AS AN ALTAR

It is man's mission to create not only something worthy of the name of man—not only to work out a destiny, but also to create a home. He should extend his moulding influence over ever-widening areas. As his mind and body should bear the stamp of this moulding activity, so should the place in which his mind is to grow and his body to prosper. There are many obstacles to be overcome on the road to his home, to say nothing of the home of society as a whole.

The heart of the father speaks with the voice of the blood: "Why do you not obey me? When I was young I desired all things, and the world lay open to me. Then I was shut up inside these four walls and had to give up everything, until I was no longer capable of anything. Since you have put my will and my strength to shame you shall at least complete my task. Or is it your wish that I should have sacrificed myself for nothing?"

The son answers in bitter words: "You speak as if I were a mere appendage of your body! I do not want your work—I want work that is my own. What right have you to talk of sacrifice? When did you ever do anything for me beyond your duty? You stand in my way. The overripe fruit ought to fall from the tree. The world belongs to youth. Did you not think so, too, when the seething blood of youth coursed in your veins?"

But when the power of sacrifice prevails over the domineering spirit, the voice of the father changes: "We are shoots of the same tree. It grows out of the soil of the generations. Who can say whither its roots strike? It cannot live without light and warmth from above. Who can tell whence it comes?



Your real work—my real work! What are we? Is not everything only a groping for that which seeks realisation through us? And do we ever realise ourselves except through atonement? Let us both become worthy of those who went before, that those who come after may call us their roads towards perfection.”

And when the son has grown humble in willingness to sacrifice, he replies: “I want to live my own life not from obstinacy or self-righteousness. But no blessing can come from anyone who does not live according to his own individual nature. When I have attained my purpose I shall bless you for the freedom you gave me and for your righteousness’ sake, and not only will I bless you, but all my actions will bless you also.”

The mother’s demand is a demand of the blood when she speaks to her daughter: “Oh, heal the wound that started bleeding the night you were torn from me—heal it with your tenderness! Do not forsake me! For you I have risked my life—nay, for you I have cut the heart out of my body; it beats no longer in my own breast but in yours. I tremble with fear lest my own heart forsake me.”

But the blood is harsh in its answer: “Let me go—let me go! The heart that beats within my breast does not belong to you but to my lover. I wish that the blood in my veins were his as well. You gave me only the semblance of life—the life of the body; but he gave me the longing of desire, never to die.”

In the mother-love cleansed by the altar-fire there is neither prayer nor anguish. “Child, I sacrificed the demands of the blood the moment I relinquished the happiness of bearing you under my heart. Until then you were my longing, my dream, and my hope. But not thus did you meet me when I laid you at my breast. You came as a new and alien being

from an unknown land, you came as a fortune confided to my care. And it became my purpose to discover you and to help you discover yourself."

The daughter who spoke in bitterness answers gently and searchingly: "There came a time when my love was imperilled, and when even the strongest flame seemed near extinction by selfishness. Then the warmth of your glorified motherhood reached me, and the void was again filled to the brim. You gave my heart the subtlety which alone saves love from destruction. Without it I should have been like a tree whose fruit is doomed to perish before it ripens. Oh, that I could be to mine what you have been to me; that I could equal you in self-forgetfulness and sacrificial devotion!"

The man says to the woman: "There lay the promise of never ending delight in your delicate limbs as you twined about me. I believed you, fool that I was. As if possessed, I have been hunted through the hell of ungratified passion. And when I tried to find a fleeting comfort with others, you whined and complained. You are withered, and your shrunken breast tempts me no longer. Give me back the turbulent flood of youthful desire that has run out into the sands and dried up!"

The woman answers the man: "Have I not toiled and moiled like a slave for the children you forced upon me—you who promised to worship and cherish me always? You have given me the weariness of a workaday life instead of life's festival. The blood does not call any longer. But from the depths of my despair I cry: Give me back my faith—that at least I may die in peace after my life of strife."

But when the home becomes an altar the man grows human—and because human, wise: "Passion is a sword. Without you it would have hung, a constant menace, above my head from the ferment of youth until the fading of old

age; and my days and nights would have been filled with consuming restlessness. But through you passion became a weapon in my hand, and with this weapon I made the world mine. Your help was my strength, your trust my defence, your warmth my happiness."

When the woman answers, the altar-fire shines like a halo about her: "There was darkness in my soul, and I did not understand myself. I do not know how the darkness was dispelled. But I do know that this is the mystery of communion: the shadows which two were unable to scatter separately scatter of themselves, the death before which two stood defenceless loses its sting of itself."

A home is every place that holds a loved thing, be it but the air itself. A home is every place that holds an altar, even if it consists only in a wish for another to be happier than ourselves. But where no love is and no altar, there is no home either.

The ancient peoples knew it. They built altars in every home. And there was no home too lowly to have a symbol of the will to sacrifice—a god of the home. They knew also that a community without a common altar is like a human being without a light in his eyes.

## SOCIETY AS SYMBOL AND CLAIR-OBSCURE

MAN is not a complete whole—man is an aggregate of living entities forming a malleable something; and this something has been given a name. Through this living aggregate the past flows towards the future. The past is called heredity and tradition; the future is called destiny and hope; the channel in which it moves is law and compulsion. Beyond the past and beyond destiny the life-aggregate coheres with all that exists—with the air, with the earth, and with all mysteries. And the self of man is not a self. It is a boundary-line between man and the world, which is not the same as it was yesterday, and which, like all other boundary-lines, not only divides but also unites.

Society is a living aggregate, like man. And, like man, society dies through mechanisation and disintegration, and is renewed through symbolisation and through the clair-obscure.

Times have been when mighty vibrations have pervaded the masses; when everything has vanished that divided one from the other, and raised brother against brother in hate and envy. The primal instinct assumed power over all minds and actions. "Take me, take my work and my love, take me entirely, thou hand that fostered me, thou soil that drank the blood of my ancestors! Thou art the cup of life, without which I languish. For thee I will sacrifice all!" Thus sounded the cry from far and near. And around the altar of society all bowed their heads in gratitude and worship.

There flutters a flag in the breeze. It flutters over the royal palace and over all the farms and estates in the country. Wherever the flag is unfurled a feeling of warmth unites the people—a distant echo from great moments when a strong

vibration ran through the masses, and the flag was consecrated as a symbol for the people, when the destiny of the people was wedded to that of the flag.

The flag does not flutter over the royal palace only, but also over the stronghold of the times that is called the *State*; and it represents the uniting force and the purport of the State. The flag fluttered when its foundation was being dug and when stone was laid upon stone, and it covered the dead bodies of the great men who reared its walls and towers. In the flag customs and traditions were fused together, and through it the laws acquired life and meaning. The happiness of the victor and the sorrow of the defeated soured around it; and the song of youth beneath its folds carried on all that had been great and noble from one generation to the other.

Century after century a struggle went on to secure the right to live for those who had not been born on the heights of society, and had not had the strength to fight their way up. When right conquered might the flag was hoisted to commemorate the progress of freedom. He who trampled freedom underfoot trampled also on the flag and became guilty of sacrilege. The flag is not only a symbol of the State; it is a symbol of society, of the people.

Unity in spite of everything—in spite of passions that drive men to hate each other and attempt each other's lives; in spite of frantic desire for gain at the expense of others; in spite of the determination of the great to be great and of the lowly to be greater than the great; in spite of the desire of the strong to govern and the conspiring of the weak to prevent all government: unity in spite of all impulses that disunite: unity simply and solely because of the instinct that transcends all other instincts; because of the primal instinct; because of union and communion: . . . It was an all-conquering wave of communion that surged up from the depths in the great

hours—and the flag was hoisted to attest *the supremacy of union and communion—the mystery of atonement.*

Only this *unity in spite of everything*, arising out of the primal instinct in terms of symbol-formation, can save us from the deadly road of dissolution. Where the flag flutters it bears witness not only to the great hours in which death was defeated—it bears witness also to the creative power owing to which these hours did not glide away like happy moods, but became guiding and determining factors; it bears witness to the energy which turned the masses into a people and made of the people a force of destiny.

Remove this symbol and blot it out as completely as if it had never been: all other uniting bonds will slacken, everything will fall asunder, and the people will be like a multitude of scattered beasts without a herdsman. The tension between instinct and will must increase, and there will be no paths left between man and man. As when broken ground is again invaded by the forest, the people will revert to the condition of a mass, to be swept away by the forces of nature and disappear. Where the symbol wanes, and where the creative instinct has no power to call forth a new unifying symbol, there is no future—there stretches only the deadly road of disintegration.

But the people for whom the flag is a living thing, and whose heart cherishes that which it stands for, this people cannot die. There is not only the murmur of song under its flag, but also the murmur of eternity. Even should it be trampled into the dust, and be disowned by enemies, and forced to slave for them; even should its flag be burned and the mention of it prohibited—the people will nevertheless secretly gather strength from the memory of the flag. And there will come a day of resurrection.

And if this people should be robbed of home and land,

and be driven out to live dispersed among other peoples who detest its very odour; if it should loudly be proclaimed that its destiny is a thing of the past, and if there should never appear so much as a glimmer of hope on its way—so long as the memory of the past remains it will not perish. It will become a leaven of the earth; and, dispossessed of its own destiny, it will become a power in the destiny of other peoples—mighty and formidable as the hate which once caused the sentence of dispersion to take effect.

And even if the last offshoot of this people should die, and a day come when none recall its name, who dares to say, therefore, that it has utterly passed away? That which was created out of its potentialities in the great hours when the symbol arose came from eternity, and went back to eternity once its earthly task was completed. Can any man fathom the measure of the peoples' contribution of life and strength to humanity as a whole? Can anyone grasp that imperceptible movement in the life-mass beyond all changing forms which represents humanity?

There are eagles perched on the Imperial throne. From under the folds of the flag they spy through space; they are watching for prey, for conquest, for the sun. From the highest to the lowest the people have been curbed under the sway of the eagles. The aquiline longing for conquest and for the sun has become the supreme law in the life of the people, and this law has been baptised and named *Duty*. "If force has to be used, it is your first duty to train yourself in force." It was the eagles that guided the education of youth; they subdued all wills to a world-wide purpose, and they fashioned the popular character. Whenever anyone paused to consider his action, and asked himself in astonishment: "Why did I do this—against my will, against my nature, against my faith and soundest instinct?" the eagles answered: "You—who are you?" And when anyone, exasperated with their power, took refuge in the temple, hoping to find protection by the

altar-fire, he found eagles perched on the pulpit as well as over the throne; and in answer to his prayers they screamed: "It is to us, only to us that you owe your sacrifice!"

*Something sank in the masses* as they were being changed into a people under the sway of the eagles. It sank deeper and deeper into obscurity; and in the course of the centuries it vanished in the dark as if it had never been. It was not only evil impulses that vanished. The eagles did not know good or evil. Many were forced to sacrifice the most precious treasures of their hearts, and to harden themselves, and become something different from what they were destined to be. The duty towards the eagles had nothing to do with the duties of the suppressed towards themselves.

*Something else rose in the masses* as they were being changed into a people under the sway of the eagles. It rose higher and higher towards the light; and at last it was as if nothing else had ever been but that which rose and became visible to all. What is the use of dwelling upon possibilities that must be destroyed in order that other possibilities may be realised?

There was a shifting in the masses while they were being moulded in accord with the law of clair-obscur under the sway of the eagles. Those skilled in contest and cunning, and able to serve the eagles' will to victory, and to sate their hunger for prey, were lifted above the level of the masses, to be covered with the glory of heroism. And if learning and wisdom could profit the State over which the eagles hovered vigilant, then even scholars and wise men received their share of honour. But those who were unable in one way or another to further the aims of the eagles vanished into nothingness in the depths of the people. The sensitive, the spiritual seekers, were hurled down as though the tenderness of the heart and the seeking of the spirit were useless.

Who measures all the sacrifices that have to be brought



in order that the mass may be transformed into a people and fulfil the destiny that is born when the emblem is raised? That *have* to be brought . . . For the transformation is possible only on the basis of sacrifice. Sacrifice is the hidden essence of the clair-obscure. And as the deadly road of disintegration can be avoided only by symbol-formation, so can the deadly road of mechanisation be avoided only through the clair-obscure.

Imperial thrones are crumbling; and there may come a day when the eagles will be no more, neither as a guiding power nor as a reality that determines fate, but merely as a memory among other memories in the archives of history. All values are disintegrated; all processes of shifting at an end; each struggles against each; the national character is but a ghost, the national will a chaos; the past is a mask, and behind the mask are illusions. The future is nothingness. . . . For the people has gone to destruction, and with it its controlling, compelling, and redeeming symbol; the masses have again become masses; and the more the chaos becomes accentuated, the more the living aggregate of society is changed into an aggregate of death.

All possibilities of regeneration hang on the clair-obscure. There must come another sinking movement and another rising movement. That which brought about the downfall of the people must recede into obscurity. And out of new depths of communion there must be born new constructive values. Will there come a day when a new and shining symbol will be given the people out of new spheres; when purified desires will strive for new aims, guided by an emblem cleansed of false appearance and deception? Will there come a day when sacrificial power, born anew through suffering and distress, strives to serve worthier gods than rapacious eagles spying their prey—and when the people, become wholly itself, will lay its full heart on the altar of humanity?

## THE LAW, THE STATE, AND THE INDIVIDUAL

WHEN communion lifts two individuals to its redeeming sphere, everything in the nature of interests and laws, calculation, self-assertion, and self-protection vanishes of its own accord. If, for a moment, the will of one is not that of the other, then it becomes so in the next moment, through mutual sacrifice. And as the tree grows through the warmth of the sun, the happiness of communion grows through the mystery of sacrifice and atonement.

But when the bond of union relaxes and its power of growth languishes, thoughts of self press to the front, and interest opposes interest. The same thing happens in the life-mass of humanity, when a rising life-wave of unity recedes and sets into fate, as that which happens between individuals when the power of love to unite has been shattered. Where the road of concord no longer lies open we must proceed along the road of discord, with laws written and unwritten, compromises, enforced decisions, the reduction of man to convenient measures, and his mental mutilation, for reasons of adaptation. It must be so. Only thus can society develop.

There clings something of death to every law. Not only because it bears witness to the death of communion which made the law necessary, nor because in the interest of society it murders instincts and desires which the sacrificial power would have resolved into reconciliation, while now they must be stifled by force. The law resembles rails upon which life must run onward in unchanging uniformity, and that which does not change does not live.

But as life and death are interwoven in the existence of the individual, and as he can grow and be perfected only on a

foundation of mechanisation and disintegration, so it is with society. Society exists not only in spite of death, but also because of death. And it becomes a road and an aid to men not only in spite of death, but also because of it. We perished like savages while the laws multiplied and imposed their burden of death upon us. But we also rose from death, through law, not as savages, but as law-bound men and women on their way towards human fulfilment and freedom.

As communion decreases in the masses the number of laws increases, and law becomes their sole hope and instrument. When hunger tears down all restraints of nature, there is nothing to be done but to impose the restraints of prohibition on every detail of daily life. But alas for the people that loses sight of the seed of death which lies hidden in the very nature of law! For law takes no account of the longing of man, or the demands of the age, or any other forces that strive to keep society plastic and susceptible to further development. Like the individual, a whole people may be crushed to death in the psychic mechanism, and become an automaton devoid of joy and happiness. And a community stereotyped into too rigid forms becomes a danger instead of a help. The strong man may escape the danger; he unburdens his own inner constraint on the social constraint, and thus achieves his freedom. But the weak who own nothing but what society gives them remain cogs in a jangling machine.

Communion dies away also through disintegration, and society lives and develops not only in spite of disintegration, but even because of it. In remote times the individual was a part of the tribe, and could no more exist without it than the foetus can exist without the parent body. But as the life-complex of the mother-child must disintegrate, so also must that of the tribe. The life of individual consciousness awakens only beyond the death of group consciousness. We do not want a union in which all things are merged indiscriminately into a state of concord whose stillness offers no paths to the

realisation of personality. We prefer a state of discord in which we may fight our way to freedom in suffering and affliction, in freedom to find the meaning of our lives. The disintegration of society makes the strong stronger—it gives him the solitude in which his soul thrives. But alas for the many to whom solitude is the worst suffering, and who lose their foothold through disintegration!

The State is the law of laws. As the shell is the protection of the snail, the State will be the protection of all men, that they may grow into their own rights. And as the framework of the skeleton sustains the body, the State will sustain those who have been trained to serve it. When war comes, and every man must give up his individual life to become an instrument of the State, we realise the danger incident to an unchangeable condition of the life-mass.

But the State is the symbol of symbols—in this fact lies the possibility of overcoming the danger. As the self is the vessel which bears individual life onward from day to day and from year to year, the State is the vessel which receives into itself the life of the masses, and carries it on from one generation to another, from the dawn of time on to eternity. If the individuals become one with the State, turning into shell and bone, what will then become of the contents of the vessel? For the State to prosper and to have something to give, it must educate the mind not only for duty but also for freedom.

For be it not forgotten that man is also the law of laws and the symbol of symbols. We must delve deep into his nature to attain that which is worthy of our endeavour and that which will one day, by the path of the unwritten law, pass on to a perpetual norm.

And only in the depth of the heart of man do things blend into a harmony, acquire meaning, and become living entities of communion.

It is in the interest of the State that the individual should develop this individuality. Unless the vessel overflows with human life and the power of symbol-formation it will not stand the test when the hour of trial comes.

## THE SELF-HEALING OF SOCIETY

THE body grows and develops organ after organ. The process is simple, spontaneous, and painless. The same is true of the soul. If an injury is inflicted on either, forces set to work to restore that which has been destroyed and to still the pain. This, too, is a simple spontaneous process that works in conformity with the order of things, and in virtue of the mystery called the self-healing power of the life-mass.

But where society is concerned people think everything can be remedied by laws and systems. Or they talk of a social spirit, and refer to the State as the realisation of the Kingdom of God on earth.

There existed always two groups. The past was the god of the one group. Led astray by the traditions of the blood, this group saw the past in a glorified light. They did not see that the past, once great and holy and worthy of adoration, had perished and become a burden. They could not distinguish between constructive values and dead walls. To *preserve* society meant, to them, to *prevent* its renewal; they failed to see that the secret of preservation is always to be found in the power of renewal. The past is not God—the past is a track that leads to the future. And those who desire nothing but that society shall continue to move for ever along this track push society further and further toward the death of mechanisation—from cowardice. For they do not want to go back to find the path of life—simply because they fear the life that the future may have in store for them.

Multitudes came swarming from the slums—rootless peoples and races. Their names did not shine with the splendour of heroism, and in their blood there was none of the glory of

the past. But their blood was hot, and it cried for power. The future was the god of this other group. Away with all that stands in the way of the future, no matter whether it be dead or alive; away with the foundation itself, if it is built up of the crimes of the rulers! They wanted to go forward, while on their banner there was always a "Back—back to nature, back to the soil, back to pre-monetary times!" And above all: "Back to paradise!" But all revolution ended with a going back to the wild beast. From the deadly road of mechanisation society was driven on to the death-road of disintegration.

There was also a third group: the advocates of a convenient amount of freedom and of necessary reforms. They sought for the roads of life. They failed to find them, but at least they barred the roads of death. They came very near the problem of self-healing, but they never grasped it to the full.

The healing of the body hangs on the constant preparedness of the million lives of which it is composed. On rare occasions only is man as prone to action as they. When the wood is aflame he may give up his own pursuits to extinguish the fire—lest the fire spread, and in spreading swallow up his own house. Man is something between a wild beast and a parasite greedy for pleasure. He is tragical. For the passions of the wild beast and the passions of the parasite within him ever rise to oppose the primal instinct. The multitudes are not conscious of any strong urge for union; this urge has been smothered by their longing for some chimney-nook of existence where they may read their papers peacefully and count their pennies, and where they may spin their nets in darkness in the hope of catching some doubtful spoil. Society's power of self-healing hangs on the ability of each individual to cope with the tragic element of life, and perfect his preparedness for healing.

The healing of the soul is rooted in the power of unification to be derived from symbol-formation. When the young

man gives up the many struggles that express the youth's "will to meaning" and his desire for a completer life, it is discouraging to see how often he becomes just the good citizen. And having become a good citizen his power to achieve good is ruined; since not only for him, but also for society, the supreme good consists in the creation of true, emancipated forms of life. The mechanisation of society is overcome by those only who, urged by an inner necessity, with their own strength break their way out of the dead uniformity of existing forms. And the dissolution of society can only be overcome by those who are able to prevail upon and absorb that which has disintegrated, changing it into unified forms of life. In the deepest sense only those citizens are good who release us from the characteristics of the ordinary citizen. For they add to our comfort and joy, and by their own example stimulate symbol-formation, thereby promoting society's power of self-healing. The man who overcomes narrowness and becomes a vessel for all that is flowing through the age immediately fills the vessel of the State with life's renewing saps. And on that hangs everything.



## CONQUERING FEELING

*"Thou shalt love . . ."* But love does not listen to *"Thou shalt !"* Like longing, and all other feelings, it is a warming flood coming we know not whence, and bound we know not whither.

You shall pray for love; you shall reach out for love. But not as the flower reaches out for the sun. You shall reach out with all the sacrificial strength there is in your soul—with all the force that flows perpetually from the depths where the primal instinct, the instinct of union and communion, lives and is constantly generated anew.

And if love comes to you in hours of grace, you shall not receive it as you receive a reward for duty done. You shall receive it as a gift, as a miracle and as a fulfilment of the mystery of atonement. But if time passes, and grace does not come to you, you shall not slacken in your effort to conquer, through sacrifice, whatever does not reach up to the purifying air of communion. For only there is freedom to be found.

It is hard, and it is not granted to all to tear hatred out of their hearts, and to cast its dead firebrands on the altar for the sake of communion. It is hard especially because an admonishing voice keeps ever whispering: "Was not your hatred justified, sprung as it was from that justice which makes the foundation of all that exists? Should you not bar the road to the wicked who with wickedness bar all roads to the seekers of God? If you kill hatred, you kill your conscience." The altar does not stand upon the highway. It is hard to find the path of sacrifice which purifies the heart of the hater and meets the demands of his conscience, and at the same time lifts the wicked out of his wickedness; the path of sacrifice

which leads to the happiness of communion above all conflicting sentiments and interests.

But it is harder, much harder, to *conquer love* in the name of communion. When does selfishness appear in a more seductive form than that of love? "You want nothing for your own sake, you have no wish but the welfare and happiness of your beloved," love whispers; and you feel like a god in magnanimity. You revel in your happiness and call it *self-surrender*; that makes it doubly tempting and sweet. But its right name is *self-capture*. Where love has not been cleansed of its claim to happiness, it has not been cleansed either of the selfishness inherent in the will to conquer.

There comes a stage in the life-course of every feeling, when this sacrifice of the last vestige of selfishness must be made—*must* be made if everything is not to perish. It is then that the tempter whispers: "It is your happiness that they want to take from you. Do not give in; rise in resistance—tread down those who threaten your happiness, and wring even the last farthing of happiness from your beloved!" But if you listen to the tempter you will lose not only happiness, but also that communion which is more than happiness—which is life itself. This communion may choose the thing you create for a symbol, or your home or your country, or God, it may call itself by any name; it is from this communion that life flows forth as from a deep and inexhaustible source. The beloved may bear the most beautiful names; instead of being an *end of life* the beloved must become a *mediator*, while at the same time happiness must be changed from a demand of selfishness into a gift of the altar.

The path of love is the path of freedom. But at a certain point the path comes to an end while the goal is still remote. Barren mountains loom and vast deserts spread before our eyes. Freedom—freedom means a close, living harmony with all the things without which we cannot exist; it means con-

quering the last remnant of death in all our relations with earth and man. For a fleeting moment freedom is attained in the rapture of love, and it is attained in the course of days and years, in the happiness of the sublimest love.

A woman who has known the joy of motherhood, and who has drunk its cup to the dregs, needs no words for explanation. She remembers but too well when her love grew to be a dead wall blocking the way of the loved son. The more she clung to the happiness that had been hers and had sustained her in the past, the higher the walls rose, and the more did she, once so gentle, rebel in hatred and embitterment and vindication of *her* love and *her* will. There was no way other than that which led from the selfishness of motherly happiness to communion through sacrifice beyond it. As she took to this path the walls crumbled readily, and the spirit of communion spread in ever-widening circles through the world of the one she loved. And she was fully reconciled and able to experience a happiness cleansed of all claims.

A man who has loved his country as the mother loves her child, and who has burned with longing to build it up, as the mother burns with longing to build the life of her child, as a thing of beauty and joy, he, too, needs no words of explanation.

There is no *feeling* in the mass of life which society contains. With whatever loving desire we may reach out towards it, we receive no response, no spark of love in return. As the fish does not live and move in air but in water, the body of society lives and moves, not in the element of love, but in that of communion. Society's form of life is communion. Communion quickens and becomes a sustaining power in the great hours of common action and common suffering; it disappears in the long intervals of routine when the community uniting people exists only in common laws and prohibitions, in taxes and restraints. Those who wish to attain

harmony with the social body and become paths to freedom for themselves and for others must not seek this harmony on the basis of feeling, but on that of communion and sacrifice. They must give up all selfish claims to happiness in the service of their country and seek the way to its altar.

None divide society more fatally than the patriots and dreamers who wish to live in a perpetual revelry of emotion evoked by the name of their country. They inspire some to love, but many more to hatred; they raise people against each other; and while firing their adherents to great deeds they arm their adversaries for battle. They praise war as the holiest of all things; for nothing equals war in fanning the passions of the masses, inflaming even the coldest. They do not see that they merely poison society—that they instil into it something alien to its nature. And in trying to bring about union on the foundation of feeling they merely cause disunion.

But those are the true apostles of freedom who beyond the dead point of feeling have reached communion and build on this. They care neither for the revelry of happiness nor for unleashed passions; they seek only the deep sources. Whenever they succeed in revealing these they enhance creative power; and something grows wherever they pass.

But the goal is higher. Freedom must be won permanently—not for years, but definitely, so that eternity itself cannot touch it. This cannot be achieved on the basis of feeling. One must reach beyond the dead point of feeling. Only he who, having passed through deserts and darkness, attains full union and communion, understands this.

The conquering of feeling is not the denial of feeling—it is the consummation. And with a force inherent in it, feeling aspires in this direction as the plant aspires to bloom. To the simple man the bodily symptoms of feeling are the more essential part; to the higher type of man the spiritual signs.

Another step, and we see that love stands for our perception of the fact that renewal is at work. When we realise this the stream of the deeps, which holds a larger measure of the power of renewal than all other streams, the stream called union and communion, becomes to us more essential than all other things. And we strain ourselves in the effort to attain it.

## CONQUERING WILL

WE wake, and we have become seers ; we perceive humanity's struggle to attain selfish ends, and our own inevitable loneliness. Our will-power weakens, and as though paralysed by the eye of Medusa we remain transfixed. We say : "I cannot—I cannot pull my strength together like the others, to fight my way ahead as they. I desire that communion which alone redeems. But action divides. It carries me and others away from the one thing needful."

But the will-power is ever born anew out of that compulsive force which none can suppress, and once again we rise and say to ourselves : "Will is the road of freedom. And freedom means to be in tune with the world in which I live and from which I derive my strength. I not only must, I *will* break away from my solitude. I *will* break the prison silence and be understood. For this one thing I will sacrifice all the joy of victories gained by external action. I will reach out towards men. I know they will hear my prayers and receive me understandingly."

Our voice becomes the voice of one calling in the wilderness ; and the louder the call the vaster the wilderness grows ; the horizon closes about us without a sign of a living being. We go on and on, carrying our heart in our hands for anybody to touch with their dirty fingers ; we search without finding. We stumble along until we drop exhausted—unable to proceed.

And we ask ourselves in wonder : "Where does the fault lie? Is it not true that the will is a road of freedom? Did I err in abandoning the ordinary forms of activity to choose the work of the spirit, and in desiring nothing but under-

standing? Shall I turn back and begin to break ground in the forests, and train myself for the struggle in the various arenas of life? Or perhaps—perhaps I was not so mistaken after all. Perhaps I have only reached an impasse. Perhaps I must attain and pass the goal for the sake of a still higher goal.”

This is the reply: “You wanted to get beyond the disintegrating struggle of the life of action. You wanted to overcome its loneliness through your work. Not the loneliness of others, only your own. Your work was selfish, and yet you believed that an effort of will would take you to the goal of freedom. Can you not see the dead point of your will? All are lonely like yourself, and like yourself all are worlds circling in the void. All creators were selfish like yourself—striving to be understood, without caring to understand. Has there been anything that divided the world more disastrously than these shrill voices and these prophets of the desert? Of what use was their sacrifice of the joy of action, since it was made merely with the view of attaining more joyful ends, and victories over the times more splendid than those won by conquerors on the battlefield?”

We answer: Oh, I see, and I will follow what I see! I will give up every thought of being understood, and I will lay on the altar even the last claim of my will. Understood by none, I will learn to understand those who do not understand. And I will teach men to meet in understanding. I will consume myself in my work, never asking: “To what good?” As the mother receives her child from distant spheres of life, and never asks “Whence?”—as she sends it out into the world, to see it glide away toward other distant spheres, and never asks “Whither?”—so will I take and give, never asking whence or whither. And if men gather in hatred and scorn, or in love and admiration round the altar on which I am consumed, I shall not heed it—if only they do gather, and if only their glances meet in understanding, in a sense of communion.

The more we aspire towards this goal in prayer the more we succeed in gathering together those inner forces that in the life of the world are scattered on a thousand ways of action. With their combined strength the forces strive for one thing only, for the building up of the personality in beautiful perfection. Not as though personality were a thing lifting itself out of the vicissitudes of the world, and as though it were a matter of giving to this thing an artistically finished form. Life exists only in giving and taking; and our personality grows great and strong only in an indissoluble connection and a perpetual reciprocity with the world. When the will passes the last point of death the connection with life which the will represents as it struggles in opposed desires and actions is not destroyed but perfected. And as a star circling in the heavens traverses first one constellation and then proceeds to another, so does our will on arriving at the dead point proceed from the life of action to a new sign. And this sign is called *effluence*.

When the conflicting forces have fought themselves to rest in the soul of the lonely man, and when all shifting and changeable things have been dissolved in the inscrutable oneness of his nature, he becomes a rest and a support for the many who are still tossed about in the desires and the delusive hopes of the active life. Torn asunder by the conflicts of each day, and sick unto death of the squabbles of paltriness, they seek the lonely man in their thoughts as the swallow seeks the shore. And when they find him, something sinks away, and what is unessential becomes unessential to them. Force and warmth come streaming towards them from this distant centre of life, and they rise again and straighten themselves to fight for the one thing essential. "In this man all that is meaningless has been conquered; it is worth while, after all, to fight in the ranks of the honest in an endeavour to overcome the passions and the folly of the masses . . . Onward!" Without a single action, without a single word, the lonely man influences the lives of the many as a sustaining, lifting,



strengthening and regenerating power, in virtue only of the fact that he is what he is, and in virtue also of the universal principle of individual effluence.

In the great hours of communion, when the whole living mass of society rose to the height of power, its power of effluence increased also; and the country became for millions a means of realising eternal values through the mere power of its existence. The country became to them a remote and perfect being, holding the mystery of life and death in its hand, and pouring lavishly from brimming vessels to every one who reached out in prayer toward its superhuman majesty. From this being they derived their existence, and from it they took their fate in submissive gratitude. They were not only able, they were willing to die for their country; in its name and in its holiness they were raised above the limits of life and death. Society did not act through a will; it acted through effluence.

Every action of society is already a symptom of disease. The law should produce order and protect the right of all through the mere power of its existence. When it is perfect, it sustains every one in his life and work; and it does so without any one becoming aware of it. Only when order has been disturbed and rights have been infringed is society called upon to intervene and act. And the more society intervenes by means of laws, prohibitions, penalties, and compulsions, the more apparent become the symptoms of disease. Where laws and restrictions confront the individual at every step, and he feels them as a compulsion and a barrier in all his pursuits, the social system is on its way to destruction. And on its way downwards it encounters war, which is the dissolution of the principle of life. For as effluence is to produce effect without action, so war is to act without producing effect.

He who in his relation to life has advanced not only from utilising to creating, but also from creating in the ordinary

human sense to creating through effluence, becomes a constructive force in society wherever he goes and whatever he does. Even though the many shifting things of daily life should disperse him, and though he should be active even as others are active, yet the essential part of him will not be lost. His every action has the weight of gold, and sinks, fructifying, into the life-mass; beyond all tension of will it shares that composure which has redeeming power, and imparts this composure to the life-mass; it wins battles without words and gestures, and tears the weapons out of the hands of those who clamour for war whenever a decision is to be reached between the nations.

But he who understands only the straining of the will towards selfish aims, and who sees in society only a battleground for the men of strong will—he who, imprisoned in his narrowness, preaches narrowness as the only good, and can show youth no better thing for which to strive than the training of the will and the laurel-wreath of the Marathon runner—let his will be never so elevated, and his aims never so reasonable in the opinion of all, he will spread strife and confusion whatever he does or fails to do, as the carp in a marble basin trouble the water whether they will or no. And if you ask who is responsible for the war, the answer is: “That man and his friends.”

## CONQUERING REASON

REASON also is a road to freedom. Reason is the instrument given us to use in our endeavours to adapt ourselves to earthly conditions, and to fall back upon as a help when grappling with the perplexities and hardships of our life on earth. But name me a single individual who reached the goal of freedom along that road, who, by the death-conquering forces of reason, felt himself exalted over all things that divide and petrify, and became one with the world in which and through which he must live.

The very contrary obtained! Each path opened up by thought was in the end blocked up by the one-sidedness of the thought it proclaimed as a truth. There remained no path other than that of criticism. But criticism stands for the wreckage of the life of thought by disintegration. Those who protect themselves and begin to build systems on the foundation of criticism will not attain life, even should they fight with the courage of despair. They will only drive the life of thought down into a deeper death—and into a stage of permanent rigidity. They cannot evade by means of reason the dead point to which reason leads.

The poet knows that every creation means a victory over reason. Inspiration means: not I, but you—not my values, but the producing of a value through me. And it does not matter whether he talks to his heart, or to his beloved, or to the spheres from which the sun shines down upon him. How often has it not been his experience that reason is unable to grasp that which is given to him; only from an outlook in the distance does he become aware of meaning and coherence. His greatness lies in his capacity of reception . . . in spite of

all. And the same is true of all of us when the creation of our own lives is concerned.

Intuition is the dormant, semi-conscious assurance that there is a higher authority, a better criterion than reason: the assurance that symbol-formation is a fact. You have fire. But only in the moment of inspiration does this fire flare up into flames—only then do you share in the power emanating from this fact. Be on your guard lest your worship of reason cause you to dry up in intellectualism. For then power is lost. He who receives only through his reason and not through his heart, and who gives only by his thought and not by his spirit, knows nothing of giving and receiving in a sacramental sense.

Conquering reason does not mean abandoning reason for mysticism; it means attainment of the highest degree of perception. There is no worse negation of life than to say: "Don't you see the inadequacy of reason! Give up your false pursuits, come back to faith!" The road to faith does not lead backward; it leads onwards along the lines of knowledge and the testing of knowledge with the sharpest weapon of reason—scepticism. If it were possible for us with our ordinary consciousness to obtain a full grasp of the life-material accumulated by knowledge, inspiration would be superfluous; we should then be able to attain our faith in an immediate way. But we cannot do this. Inspiration draws all unconscious worlds into the range of our evaluation. And the result is given us not as a product of reason, but as a symbol. He who rejects reason as a road rejects symbol also as a goal.

"What is truth?" is a question that has been asked in all ages. Those who have asked this question have thought of satisfying the demands of reason only, not the demands of symbol-formation. Therefore this question has been asked in vain. A man is true intellectually if he refrains from lying or deceiving. But symbolically he is true only if he lives in

terms of essentials, and if his actions reveal his inner being. Through the operation of symbol-formation dreams reveal what we are trying to escape from by lying. If we want to attain wholly to the truth we must live wholly in terms of symbolisation.

We cannot attain truth until we conquer reason; for what does it avail to disclose the lie of thought as long as the lie of symbol remains, secretly forcing the thought to think what it does not wish to think?

## CONQUERING COMPULSION

SINCE time immemorial people have reckoned with four temperaments: and similarly we have to reckon with four fundamental faculties of the mind. We are concerned here with the same deep currents in the abyss of human existence; there is a popular name for these currents, and a learned one. It is not the names that matter, however, but the understanding.

As we always and in every human being find something that feels, something that wills, and something that thinks, so we also find *something that compels*. As far as we can trace these "somethings" they run apart like rivers sprung from different glacial heights, or like well-springs in the earth coming from the south, the east, the north, and the west. No more than thought can be derived from will can compulsion be derived from anything else; it remains the same compulsion, no matter in what direction we follow it in quest of its origin.

The more intensely we experience something, the more our hearts are moved, and the farther we are carried by this invincible wave of emotion away from all things that hitherto existed for us. And the more does our will strain towards new ends, and the more subtle do our thoughts become in devising means for attaining these ends; and above all, the more unrelenting does the compulsion prove within us. The strength of compulsion increases with that of emotion, and with the tension of the will. When we reach the final depths of our feeling we reach also our last necessity, and we submit without resistance. We call the inevitable element fate, and in the supreme hour of ecstasy we turn to fate in love and yearning.

Like the other fundamental faculties, compulsion also is a road to freedom. Did you ever feel so far from freedom as when all compelling elements disappeared, and you neither had a destiny yourself nor were a force of destiny for others—when you drifted passively on the current of chance, and neither felt the grip of life on your wrist nor had the strength to grasp, from inner necessity, that which happened to come in your way? He who never felt the compelling and inevitable element in communion with another knows nothing of life, and least of all does he know anything of love. It is from a dread of the unfreedom of dissoluteness that the majority of men accept the rigid railway tracks of life, preferring them to the anguish with which we meet a day which from morning until night is destitute of all compulsion.

But for us who desire something more than the majority—who want to reach beyond the limitations in which narrowness has kept man imprisoned for thousands of years—for us this road leads no more surely to the goal of freedom than does any other road. There comes a time when we experience what the poet experiences when he feels the nearness of inspiration and cannot partake of it; we are again caught at a dead point, and we glimpse the goal far beyond it. Fate is no longer our friend.

When we seek the name of the higher symbol toward which compulsion strives beyond itself, the word "power" falters to our lips.

We remember hours of transformation when hard obstructions yielded to leave us masters of recalcitrant destinies. The sky was filled with light, and we were again able to breathe after being stifled with the depression of the times. Our backs grew straighter, and our profile seemed to acquire a Cæsarian sharpness.

Power! In such hours our power revived and became

redeeming. Of what avail is communion or effluence, or the inspiration of symbol-formation; of what avail is all that is highest and best unless power surges up like a wave from the depths, and lifts it out of the shadowland of dreams into the regions of reality? Power is the blood without which the arm whitens and withers; power is the stream of energy without which the arm drops paralysed. Without power communion is but a dreamer's phrase, and effluence the pretext for a life of indolence; without power all that rises with symbolisation evaporates into meaningless fancies. But when power is added the waves that surge up from the depths become creative.

Redeeming power! There are some who naturally possess this wonderful thing, as others possess goodness of heart, and still others have the gift of music. Who has not witnessed the miracle that occurs in their presence? What was dark became clear, and questions seemed to answer themselves; life's hard necessity softened, and the stony soil of fate grew fertile; impotence yielded, and eyes were opened to the glory of life. Is not perhaps the earth itself sensible of redeeming power when a [man] approaches in [whom it abounds?

There have been leaders who possessed redeeming power, and who—not by means of violence, but by means of this power—were lifted to the ruler's throne. They became greater and greater in proportion as the power spread around them—not as individuals, but as *symbols*, they were lifted up by the masses. Through them communion became more than a passing state of mind; it became an eternal fact, and communion made the country rich.

But, like all other things, power may disintegrate, become mechanised and decay; no longer vivifying and redeeming, but only spreading death and causing bondage. As when



ecstasy subsides . . . Where redeeming power dies force takes its place.

In despair, and with spasmodic efforts, we strain after what lately came to us of itself. We assail obstacles that refuse to yield; they only grow more resistant. Those who were as wax in our hands as long as we redeemed them, and taught them to find themselves, harden and are ready to answer our words with blows. The leader who no longer has redeeming power, the sole power that *entitles* to a leader's position, raises the people against him in battle. Resistance increases of itself. If he seeks to break it with violence he perishes through violence. The fate of the tyrant is predestined.

Every one who, within the range of his activity, is a leader by the grace of God, and communicates redeeming power to all with whom he deals, contributes something of life and creative power to society as a whole. Freedom grows through him as the forest grows through light and sun; through him the lives of individuals are attuned to the life of society.

For the social body does not move and change in accordance with the laws of compulsion, but only in accordance with those of power. There is no necessity in it, only power: a living, redeeming power, as all might realise in those great hours when society became one tremendous source of power inspiring every man with a sense of being the master and the ruler of great riches; or a deadly and destructive power, as all might realise when the days of grandeur were at an end, and violence tore happiness from them, trampling them down in the tread-mill of mechanisation. As power sinks down into death, a sigh is heard: "Neither high nor low rule society—all is illusion. As the stone in its fall is subject to mechanical laws, so is society. Let us die in submission. There is no other salvation."

Those in whom the power of redemption has died and who,

disintegrated to their very core, oscillate between self-abnegation and impulses of violence, and the obdurate who bear the name of evolution on their lips, yet never saw happiness grow from a human soul in their presence: it is these that kill society's creative energy and change living humanity into a heavy mass sinking to its death.

## DID THEY NOT SEE IT?

DID they not see it, the few that are born with the light of the spirit and with the acumen of thought—the few that choose the prophet's road, not for a profession, but for a true vocation? Did they not see that new gods and new systems of thought could not help them to escape from the sterile depths in which humanity's futile struggle for peace and freedom is rooted? As they built and pondered and preached, things grew more and more confused, and the world became a tangle in which a wretched humanity could find neither beginning nor end.

Did they not see that man is like a fish that tries to live on land, to share in the warmth of the sun, and to that end must change its gills into lungs? It flops and pants, unable to get air. All the new products of thought and all the results attained by the organs which man used in the wilderness do not suffice; with the aid of these he cannot achieve communion with his world in a thousand, nay, in ten thousand years—never. It is a question of recreating the very organs by means of which the world is apprehended and acted upon. The solution of the "problem of orientation" depends on this recreation—as does the question whether or no man will be able to get air or will be stifled to death.

The seed for this creation of new organs has always existed, and in all times has striven to develop out of its own power for growth. Why was it hampered in its growth? In all times men of strong minds have lived and worked not with the aid of the organs which were to disappear, but with the aid of those to which the recreating process was tending. The small poets lived on swiftly changing moods and feelings, but the great seers drew their life from the inspiration of "mystical oneness"—from the celestial depths of communion. The

simple interpreter of thought lived on the ponderings of one philosopher or another; but the great thinkers felt that they lived fully only in hours when all the scaffoldings of thought broke down and the world-symbol arose pure and transfigured out of the lumber-heaps. The insignificant who wished to contribute something to the common welfare were happy when they reached some near-by object of desire, but the great, who desired something more, and did not let themselves be checked by the greatest successes, could feel no joy unless they saw the effect of their being vanish somewhere in the most distant relations of the universe. Pedants of research were content when they had succeeded in comprehending a mechanical process; they lived in the atmosphere of compulsion, and knew only the iron bondage of law. But the true searchers saw all nature as a being longing to be understood; longing to be released from its bondage through understanding, and to become a redeeming power; like the waterfall whose secret is known to man, and like themselves when they reached lucidity. Did they not see that only one thing matters: that they should transform their own most vital experiences into directive forces for humanity—that they should call into life those organs for perfect growth in virtue of which they themselves lived and wrought and gained freedom? Did they not see this? Or did they wish to live alone on the heights?

No life can be built harmoniously on the foundation of the old organs. As long as feeling and reason are so reputed to be the highest determining factors in the human soul, this human soul must be torn between faith and knowledge, hope and logic. Compulsion must always struggle against will; and all talk about "the freedom of the will" must for ever remain as empty and meaningless as it has always been. Man is divided in his being through the very formation of these organs; and as long as life continues along these tracks as on immovable rails there is no way to that living unity without which life does not deserve the name of life. For thousands of years

humanity has wandered through the valley of death. Did they not see this?

Those who from the sphere of the vanishing organs are lifted up to that of the new are at the same time removed from the shadow of death to the revivifying, warming sun of life. There is no struggle of one thing against another. In breaking through the barrier and reaching past the dead points on the roads of freedom we are delivered also from the grip of destructive disharmony. There is no such contrast between communion and symbolisation as there is between feeling and reason; the one cannot be conceived without the other. Each time a living symbol is created there is an effort at union between all things that struggle within a human being as well as between him and his world. There is no such contrast between individual effluence and redeeming power as there is between will and compulsion; each moment filled by the former is filled by the latter also. The old organs were separate currents flowing in different directions; the new organs are the confluence of all currents into one river, broad and deep and conscious of the nearness of the sea.

It is on the formation of type that all social development ultimately rests; and a fit human type can no more grow out of the old organs than a fit tiger type can grow out of the tiger's blood-thirst. What takes place in our inner being is of necessity cast out into the world with our every action and with our every word. Where all live in an atmosphere of unsolved conflicts society is bound to become a battle-ground of conflicts. And all must live in unsolved conflicts as long as life with its changing forms is built on irreconcilable contrasts.

All social architects knew that man must be changed. But did they not understand what kind of change man must undergo? If they did, why did they lead poor humanity astray with all kinds of wiles? They must have seen that around human beings who have evolved the new mental organs society will

develop as simply and naturally as the shell grows around the snail. For the man who has himself attained the fullness of harmony cannot help communicating harmony to others.

One and all they checked something which was striving to take place in the inner life of the individual and in that of humanity, and which is bound to take place some day, despite all barriers. With their narrow wisdom they put a chain around the neck of man and changed him into a ferocious watch-dog, barking: "This is mine! This is mine! Do not come here! Beware!" And as the spirit of union and communion, the primal impulse, was killed in the watch-dog, so it was killed in man.

They may have seen and understood, and they may have discerned the path that leads to reality. But the crowd wants to be deceived. Confronted with the choice between the palpable lust that burns in the blood and the uncertain joy that hovers at a distant goal, the crowd always chooses the first. Did those who knew something yield to the will of the crowd? To avoid going under—through the will of the crowd?

## THE LION AND THE SERPENT

WE are facing the greatest task ever enjoined upon man : the modelling of the world-community. This task is not fulfilled by the imposition of laws and restraints, nor by compromises ; it has a common altar to which all nations and states must bring their offerings. Our task is not forcibly to produce something for the benefit of ourselves and of those coming after us ; our task is to see and understand what is being wrought in the life-mass, and by giving up all that may obstruct the processes in the life-mass to become active instruments in the creation of constructive values.

What we should strive for is not to weld nations and states together in a unity that runs counter to all of them—we should work for their consummation by common creation. In the degree in which a man has succeeded in adapting himself to his solitude he will become a socially constructive force. Not only has the personality that remains closed in its own fullness an upbuilding effect on those who come near him ; he has a stimulating effect on the mass as a whole, whether he wishes it or not. And the more a people has realised a mutual spirit of communion, the more it will become a creative force in the service of the whole—will become a road and a help toward the self-healing of the earth, torn asunder by the struggles of tens of thousands of years.

The strongest obstruction to common creation lies in such symbols as comprise at the same time the seeds of hatred and the power to defeat, symbols for which millions have had to die. Those symbols continue to permeate thought and to cause the will to strain toward the continued building of dead walls. World evolution has made them less conspicuous, but not less dangerous. When the lion puts on the coat of the lamb and

changes its roaring into a call for righteousness, then there is reason for the nations to ask in awe: "What is going to happen?" Formerly the serpent lay coiled on the turban of the ruler as a sign of warning to all not to approach his territories. Now the ruses of impostors furtively find their way into every council, and to poison each other with calumny and lies is the combatants' highest merit.

When war comes the masks fall and all that was hidden is revealed. As if they had been regenerated out of their oblivion, symbols once again become primitive gods demanding hecatombs of human lives. War is a madness that makes us call for reason to govern the order of the world. Away with all old signs! Place reason on the altar instead of the cross and the banner! But values constructed artificially are unable to hold their own against the forces of the depths. Reason is never harder to conquer than in this connection. The old sign of violence and will to power can be prevailed upon only by forces arising from new symbols in tune with our soul and our heart. Hence—away with the old walls that obstruct the process of symbol-formation in its endeavour to raise the sign in which the world is to be united and made alive!

A new religion then? A new sign of concord with a will to defeat the old? No indeed. That is the last thing that must happen. The new religion of mankind bears the same name as the aboriginal one—"Man." But to be human is to be neither a lion nor an eagle, neither a serpent nor a lamb; it is to hold eternity in one's heart and yet be full of eagerness to pursue the earthly pilgrimage.

There is no stronger craving in man than the craving for creation. Only by creation does life assume a meaning. And only in common creation does this meaning become a constructive force. But the more society becomes subject to mechanisation the more the paths of creation are obstructed. The man who has become a cog in a machine will no longer



taste the craftsman's joy in shaping something with his hands. But the most important of all the paths of creation cannot be barred—the path to the kingdom of the world. There is joy and renewal for all of us in the endeavour to reach this lofty aim by common creation. There is none but is able in his heart and within the limits of his power to remove something that obstructs the attainment of this aim.

## A MONUMENT OF WORLD-POWER

THERE in the centre, towering on hewn blocks of granite, the hero stands—he that solved the people's vital problem with "Blood and iron" and who, like none other, had power to compel them to sacrifice. A giant kneels at the foot of the pedestal, holding a globe on his overburdened shoulders; it is as though one heard the exhortation hissed between the hero's lips: "My will—your destiny—prepare yourselves to inherit the earth!"

To inherit—but not like one who accepts humbly and gratefully what comes to him in the course of life. Germania stands to the giant's right—strong and coarse of limb, treading underfoot a lion that fights unto death. The inheritance shall be entered into by force and by deeds; and if all the powers should rise in opposition, they shall be trampled into the dust by an overwhelming ambition. At the end of the struggle, glory and eternity stand beckoning: behold Germania where she sits on the sphinx to the giant's left, reading in the open book of history. The riddle of humanity is solved, not with thought, but with power; the question asked by the sphinx when for the first time she lifted her head over the desert to gaze into infinitude is at last to receive an answer, different from any she ever dreamed of; the motto inscribed over the solution of the people's vital problem is to be inscribed also over that of humanity. Listen to the blows of the hammer! It is not the sword being wrought into a plough-share. In the rear, at the hero's back, a gigantic figure stands by the anvil. As the hammer falls heavily on the sword that will soon be ready to strike, it is as though the words: "blood and iron—blood and iron—blood and iron" were being hammered into the people itself,

Deaf to all prayers, the symbol of power wrested tenderness from every soul and branded devotion to personal ends as enmity towards the State. "It is your duty, sword in hand, to serve your country with your blood; it is your duty to prepare yourself for service and to banish all objections. If your reason should bid you oppose me, it is your duty to stifle the voice of reason; reason is human, but I am divine." Thus the demand of the symbol fell on the ears of one and all as generation followed generation.

The monument remained standing, ominous and immutable in the midst of the people, and saw the years passing—not merely as an image which none could evade, but as a power imparting its power to all, an "effluence" accomplishing what nothing else could accomplish. And, first and last, as a source of strength for that union from which, in a first thrill of happiness, it had originated, and which it was to save from destruction through its all-conquering power.

There is no hour so fateful in the life of a people as that in which its character assumes shape in tangible form. As when a poet, having dreamt and sought, having hoped and been deceived, suddenly sees the symbol rise from depths hitherto inaccessible and become a living reality before his eyes. . . . What before was a possibility among uncertain possibilities in the people's life has suddenly become real and certain. Time changes all things. But when the hour strikes, when the event which gave birth to the symbol no longer lives in any heart, the symbol still remains where it was raised, changed like all other things, but changed in a way that leaves it more inexorably fixed in eternity than ever before.

If there is anything spurious in the shaping of its fate, woe to the people! This spurious element will distort its soul, hound it and drive it away from its real self; and on the false tracks the people will rush to destruction—or to the catastrophe that may open its eyes.

False? As though the symbol, sprung from the course of events and from the core of life itself, must not always be genuine! How could anything created not by human hands be spurious?

Indeed, symbols are witnesses to truth. Where the monument rises, it reveals the nation in a profounder and a truer sense than the nation itself is willing to concede. But it also reveals the truth in the saying, "*Vulgus vult decipi*"—"World supremacy"—"the superior right of existence"—"the subjugation of the lion": these are ancient illusions which those greedy for power have always held up to the nations as shining idols, and with whose aid they have led them to destruction. If nations were not like the animals which have to-day forgotten the sufferings of yesterday they would never let themselves be deceived again. If they were like individuals who live each day on the basis of the accumulated experiences of the past, the leaders would be compelled to take to the road of reality! And whenever symbols were formed unifying them and revealing their communion, these symbols would not merely testify to the truth: coming from depths purged of all illusions, they would be truth itself.

A tragical course of fate, to which there seems to be no remedy but force! But whosoever uses violence to oppose fate makes fate a power of violence. And whosoever tries to tear asunder the bonds of a tragic fate changes the bonds into chains. It is the task of the prophet to open men's eyes and to strengthen their hearts, so as to prevent history from definitely following some fatal line of destiny.

Was there none in that fateful moment when the monument of world-power was erected who refused to pursue the path of the crowd and had the strength to rise and oppose his "No"? Was there none, animated with the holy wrath of the prophet who could proclaim the truth: "This is not right!—it is *not* the road to the future! We need another symbol to

unite us! It is not through force that we contribute our share to the life of humanity. Ours is a divine vocation—do not destroy it!”

No, there was none. For the cheers of victory were too loud; they silenced all human voices. And the nation had to tread the path of sorrow, like every one of us who wills to be deceived.

## THE LAW OF GENTLEMEN

ANY people which has created no other unifying symbol than that of the war hero favoured by fortune, and which has attempted no sacrifices but those required by war, is still living on a primitive social level. As primitive man is constantly threatened by dangers which we have succeeded in averting or escaping, so is primitive society built on quaking volcanic soil. One hero supersedes another, and the process of type-formation is never finished. Some follow one leader and some another, and society is thrown from crisis into crisis, until the whole breaks under the tension and collapses.

Dangers increase as the bulk of society increases, expands, puts forth fresh shoots, and develops new organs. Every day with new possibilities, every event with new incentives, every success with new claims intensifies the inner tension, and drives the people more inexorably to aspire after new forms of symbolisation. That emperor will come to grief who presumes to encompass life in its present form and be the father of his people in the same sense as the founder of his dynasty. If he does not burst with his own excessive arrogance he will surely be shattered when the forces that ferment in the people break loose and express themselves in action.

Instead of expressing itself in an individual, life as a whole, under the new order of things, strives for expression in a thing of superhuman value. Out of the creative power inherent in the masses there rises, not a leader, but a leading idea. Thanks to symbolisation the idea takes form in an unwritten law, a line of development, a type, an ideal—in something to which men submit, and for which they sacrifice themselves in fulfilment of duty, as simply and naturally as in former times they submitted to a ruler; something through which

they gain their life as they formerly gained it through the splendour emanating from the person of the ruler; something in which they realise themselves as they realised themselves in him.

The new value has a range which the individual could never attain; and thanks to this fact it can easily absorb into itself all the new vital assets; it has the plasticity which is the only thing that saves it from breaking. As formerly the masses were limited by the limitations of the hero, and as his genius became the shell called the *State*, so the new value becomes not only the tie uniting individuals, but also the invisible thing which controls their collective, creative and moulding endeavours. And that individual grows up to be a hero who, through his work, his personality, or his fate, embodies this value, making it clear and conscious in the life of the crowd; for in so doing he becomes an instrument that serves to increase the strength and importance of the State.

This transformation of the symbol involves a welling forth of new currents from the depths of union and new possibilities of release for the primal instinct. People unable to meet in worship of one and the same individual may meet in adoration of one and the same superhuman value. Only the masses who have reached these depths have the strength of unity which endures in the hour of trial; only a people which has sufficient sacrificial strength to tread this path of transformation may hope for a future.

Who fathoms the sacrifices which had to be made before the unwritten law of the gentleman succeeded in creating a fit social type out of the violent and aggressive viking who formerly took possession of the country? A blood-stained monarch could never have tamed his forces and controlled his passions as did this all-dominant ruler who acted without action; and none but this law would have been a power, redeeming everything the people desired in their heart of

hearts. It signified a retreat into the past of something that has served its time, and simultaneously a rise of something else pregnant with the future.

If the brutality which ruled from the first had not found its match in this ruler, it would have led the people to perdition rather than to world-supremacy. From its inner irrepressible energy everything called life strives to reach beyond itself—strives for expansion. The manifestation of brutality is called force, and the expansion of force is called aggression. Every power ruling by force which leaves free play to the desire for aggression arouses opposition; opposition grows through opposition, and in this way the power at last works its own destruction. Nothing can save it but a value which, rising from the deepest well-springs of life, brings brute force to submission and supplies new outlets for the desire for expansion.

The type of the gentleman might spread all over the world and impart to all the valuable qualities which made the gentleman what he is but for one reason. . . .

The creation of the gentleman's law is no more free from the illusions which attend all success than is the monument of world-supremacy. The man who has been successful in a test of strength immediately raises his head with a sense of superiority over others. But when anyone disciplined by the law of the gentleman, and manifesting in his movements the restraint which no true gentleman exceeds, meets a fellow-creature still living in the purgatory of temperament, the idea immediately suggests itself to his mind that after all he is superior to that creature. And with the logic of feeling he at once draws the conclusion: "This entitles me to be his master."

Among the people who had developed this type there were not lacking those who desired power. To gain the desired power they had to inveigle the people into serving their ends, and they were shrewd enough to avoid the lure of world-



domination as a bait. They cultivated instead the sense of obvious superiority; and when this bore fruit they could carry the people with them on any adventure in quest of power. The people did not see that they were being used to suppress and trample on the rights of others. They wanted to be deceived.

And they did not want to see the truth: that that which distinguishes the master from the servant is not the fact that the former is better than the latter; it is merely that the former is capable of serving many while the latter can serve but one. It is the capacity for service. The great have served thousands by creating roads and power-stations and social systems. The still greater have served peoples and ages. The greatest of all have served the work of humanisation and eternity.

There is an altar in the innermost sanctuary of the human heart which none reaches without knowing the joy of service. The prophet who could show the gentleman the road to this altar, and there induce him to lay aside the illusion of pride and the justification of power, would remove one of the most dangerous obstacles to the victory of the great communion between all peoples. And he would save a nation of gentlemen from the path of destruction followed by all who follow the path of illusion.

## LIBERTY, EQUALITY, FRATERNITY

A MAN who wishes to build a house begins by testing the durability of the stones before he cements them together. If he finds one of the blocks too soft to withstand the frost he places it in the chimney rather than in the outer wall. He chooses the hardest block of all, the one capable of bearing the entire weight of the building, for a corner-stone. And he knows that the cornice will never touch this corner-stone until the whole structure lies in ruins.

But wherever human beings have their entrance and exit the modern builder of society puts up his device: "Liberty, Equality, Fraternity." And he does not even see that in so doing he sins against the most elementary principles of building. This all-embracing symbol is to set its stamp not only on one nation, not only on various nations respectively, but on humanity as a whole. Those who talk of it incessantly and those who hew it in the stone of action have no doubt that the last word for the perfecting of society has been said.

Are they not aware that the first step on the road to liberty is the freedom to bind oneself? Are they not aware that every bond presupposes sacrifice, and that nothing can save a man from unfreedom if he lacks the sacrificial strength to bind himself?

Man is a wretched being who from birth to death is as inevitably ruled by a compelling force within him as is the stone from the moment when it is torn from its setting until the moment when it has ceased to be a stone. In man this compelling force is called instinct, and in the stone it is called weight; both are the same, the latter being the dead manifestation of the former. As man must unburden his feelings

on the world in love and hatred, so he must unburden himself of the compelling element. There is no other way to relief—to say nothing of a way to freedom. The will aims at what can be achieved in time, emotion at eternity, reason at safeguarding life from dangers, and compulsion at binding organisation. A strong feeling of freedom fills him who, after having strayed irresponsibly, is taken care of by society and accorded a place in it like everybody else—and who day after day is compelled to make the same sacrifices in its service as everybody else. A soothing hand is laid on all the bloody, violent, wrathful instincts which during his time of irresponsibility harassed him from morn till night. A stone cannot feel safer and more content when it is put in its proper place at last, and knows that it will be left there for a thousand years.

If those who call out the great name of freedom in all sorts of assemblies had in mind the true roads to freedom rather than the illusion of the freedom that lies in irresponsibility, they would raise their voices and instead call out one word: "Sacrifice!" Then they would be silent, ashamed of their past, and would go each to his own town to build altars in peace. Thus society would grow in freedom as the tree grows upward of its own immanent force. But they do not care for the growth of freedom; they care only for the success of their party. Reality is no good as a political platform. The crowds wish to be deceived.

As they hide the fact that binding is the first step to freedom, so they hide the fact that differentiation is the first step towards equality. As if differentiation—that is, the necessity of moving different things to different places—were the result of human action, and not a fundamental fact of life; as if it cared any more for the decision of the masses than do the laws of gravity!

Would not the very fact of symbol-formation, of all facts the most essential, come to naught without this differentiation?

Was not the leader always placed in the forefront, as the outcome of a process of differentiation comprising society as a whole? When the people donned the cloak of sovereignty it pushed aside those who failed to fit the name of "people"—all emancipated minds and all true seeds of humanity. Wherever "equality" makes its appearance as a popular symbol those are lifted up who are able to play the part of equality illusively, and those are pressed down into the obscurity of insignificance who desire to be themselves; above all, those who want to cleanse the idea of equality of everything that is illusive and attain perfection along the road of the ideal.

He who can find an outlet for himself in a work fully harmonising with his inner being becomes humble and happy in the feeling of service. In serving he feels himself on an equal footing with the highest as well as with the lowest; they all serve one and the same purpose in a way proportionate to their abilities. He knows that the employer bears a heavier part of the day's responsibility than the employee; that the social leader bears a heavier part of the responsibilities of the age than the employer; that the prophet bears a heavier part of the responsibility of eternity than the social leader. But he does not envy anyone who, in virtue of his higher responsibility, stands above him, and he does not humiliate even the lowest of the lowly either by word or by deed. He has sacrificed vanity and the desire for possession; and he has fully accepted the fact of readjusting differentiation as he has accepted everything else that belongs to his world: but if the proud man is forced to accept an equality which does not lie in the nature of things he rises like a wounded animal in hatred and aggressiveness, and anti-social instincts are liberated in his soul.

This is the dreadful truth: If man, misled by illusions, gives up his position of ascendancy, leaving nature to take care of herself, nature takes back what was born from her womb. Just as when the axe in the forest wearies, the forest reclaims all the pastures and fertile fields. . . . When the fact of differ-

entiation is denied, this terrible thing happens—humanisation is frustrated also. While all things are whirling toward the abyss in mass illusions, the whirlpool tosses up mass murderers to the place of leadership. When Demos is unchained the most brutal of tyrants will soon occupy the throne; and to bridle the unchained beast the tyrant resorts to the crudest of all illusions: "Demos is sacred."

But the illusion of fraternity is there to hide the hardest fact of life. Its loud fanfares will soon silence the cry of loneliness in the poor human heart. As though the law of nature did not bid men travel alone, as it bade the planets circle in the void! As if *the gospel of fraternity* could be attained by any but those who obeyed *the law of loneliness*; who fasted in the wilderness, and beyond the heights and depths of happiness and suffering fought their way to freedom and became themselves!

The majority, the great majority of men are incapable of the many sacrifices of unessential things which are required to achieve communion—to say nothing of all that is required before we may reach brotherhood, communion's fairest flower. We must not only overcome differences of taste and feelings, of costume and ideals. We must even overcome that which divides more than anything else—atmosphere. Only he who has drained the bitterest cup of loneliness can endure, day after day, a strange and uncongenial atmosphere and not lose his temper.

There is nothing that makes men hate each other more frankly than *enforced fraternity*. The pure rise against it, and all that longs for air and life in their souls cries out: "Away—away!" If they have already been captured by partisanship and bound with its bonds they are overwhelmed with disgust—that disgust which only the animal called "man" can wake. Or this feeling may be smothered in cynicism; they may smile craftily and argue: "Fraternity, after all, is useful as a road to power; being the elder brother I am entitled to guardianship

over the others." And then the battle flares up anew, in the spirit of mutual loathing.

There was much illusion in the old symbol "sovereignty by the grace of God"; and it had to go. But there was also much of that loyalty and devotion, that glamour and prestige which are signs of life: and this has to be regenerated by every symbol that is to appropriate the inheritance of the past in a worthy manner. But when the mass broke with what had been and replaced it by "the sovereignty of the masses," then the living body of society was not lifted up to new spheres of creation. Dissolution followed . . . not because the road as such was false, but because the desire of the masses for illusion turned the road into a false road.

Does anyone become a genius by pointing to himself and saying: "I am a man of genius"? Much less a sovereign. For genuine sovereignty is the climax of creation; it is the power of personal effluence, developed by fortunate circumstances and the exercise of all virtues to a point not to be transcended: to the sphere of genius and fulfilment. If the people had desired the road to the heights—the unspeakably arduous, perilous way of freedom towards an uncertain happiness hovering in the distance—it would not have written, "Liberty, Equality, Fraternity" over the gateway of the new age. It would have written, "Sacrifice, Atonement, Communion."

## THE LINE OF THE NEW WORLD

SOMETHING prodigious has come to pass: millions of men of all colours, the descendants of many antagonistic races, have been thrown together with nothing else in common than the will to succeed and to emancipate themselves from all considerations. And this chaos, which according to the laws of reason should have remained a chaos for all time, and according to the men of learning should have met with early destruction, has, by inner forces, been transformed into a people—a people as unified as other peoples, and stronger and fitter for life than most of them. He will never understand this who has never grasped the fact of symbolisation.

There is a line along which these millions of lives run, inevitably and uniformly—a line that has more power over their minds and actions than all that divides them. This line governs education, and is a corrective to the waywardness of the self-willed: “My country is larger and better than any other country—the future belongs to me rather than anybody else; there is no better fortune than to belong to my people. What do we care about others? We have everything!” Thus they strain their energies, goaded by emulation and the determination to be first. For they want to win the future by means of that power over things which is conferred by happiness and self-reliance. There is nothing more alien to the type produced by the following of this life-line than the desire to harvest the future in idle peace as a ripe fruit of the past.

If we ask whence this line has come, this union and communion in spite of all, this power to redeem, fathomless depths open before us, as always when we look for the origin of a symbol; we know not whether we behold the interior of the earth or the splendour of the heavens. There was no tradition

in these masses detached from different strata of civilisation—still less was there anything in the aboriginals of the New World out of which the symbol could develop. No prophet could have foretold what was to happen. One day it was done, the symbol was there, and none had seen it coming—as though it had sprung from nature itself and not from man. Was it perhaps the land itself which, with its unexploited infinities and inexhaustible treasures, cried out: “No country is like me, and none is so fortunate as the man to whom I offer myself?” Was it perhaps the land, glowing with energy and hope, that forced its nature on the people, and with it the symbol? It was not out of a communion already created between the masses that the symbol arose, but out of the communion of all with the earth. And in growing the symbol absorbed into itself all fermenting, conflicting, irreconcilable elements.

He who has a *line* for a symbol wherewith to resolve contrasts builds on a safer foundation than he who has a *law*. Even though the law have the whole plasticity of the unwritten law, there nevertheless clings to it something of the rigidity that is a sign of death. But the line admits of being bent in all directions, and its curves reflect even the slightest changes in the people. The law is a goal, with the limitation of the attained goal. But the line is a path with a thousand deviations that lead on towards the possibilities of the unknown. And the more living the foundation on which we build, the securer the result.

But he who has a line for a symbol to determine his life runs always the risk of the man who, following a road, forgets the road for the goal. His mind is engrossed by what is coming, and he stares so steadily ahead that he sees nothing of the present. Unmindful, he passes by every delightful view, and is blind even to the most inviting places of repose. When at length he reaches the goal, and perchance finds it to be a city with houses as dreary as those of his own, and people rushing



past each other through streets as grim as those he knew before, then he may well ask himself: "What's the use?"

The peril of this element of illusion in the life-line increases if the line expresses not only the conviction: "My country is better than any other country—my houses are bigger than any other houses," but also the creed: "My speed is greater than any other speed." For then it may chance that everything capable of attracting the emotions and inviting the thoughts to rest in contemplation is brushed aside as a disturbing element, and that life itself is in the end conceived of as an error in the construction of the motor; for, to be sure, the motor of social and individual life will run more smoothly the less regard is paid to happiness and passion, to beauty and the unreasonable demands of the heart.

The people of the New World, dashing ahead in quest of unknown aims along a line which is gradually losing its elasticity and turning into a railway-track, do not see the road along which humanity has been doomed by the past to travel. They are not aware of it within themselves as are those who live in and through the power of tradition. And on the other side of their big ocean they feel safe: they need only be concerned with their own aims; the burden under which others succumb will never come near them.

But if they were to slow down and look around them they would see the old problems with which others have struggled for thousands of years looming on the horizon. If they would pause a while to reflect they would see that none is better off than the rest, and that the happiness of all hangs on the union and communion of all. If they did stop, the train would probably tear on again in a moment. No one has the redeeming power to stay the course of fate. The people want to be deceived. They want not only the buoyant, strong, and trustful element that lies in the symbolical line, but also the illusion inseparably interlaced with it.

Have the ambitious striven for this? Have they striven to hide truth and foster illusion? The great dollar princes have nothing in mind but development of the motor and victory in competition—that is, victory in the universal race. The last thing they want is communion. They fear it as a competitor in their efforts to gain control over the masses. And they have reason to fear it!

## THE NEUTRAL TYPE

WHO christened the neutral and branded him with the stigma of sexlessness? Perhaps someone who in the midst of the struggle appealed in vain to his mercy for help? As though it took less manly energy to resist the lure of war and the hope of victory than to give way and to strike! Does not the lust of battle burn in all of us as an instinct exceeded in strength only by the primary instinct?

As if it were manlier to indulge in the actions of the universal race, those cruel, cunning actions inevitably leading to sanguinary deeds, rather than to action through effluence like that of the neutral! Does not manliness derive its fullest glamour from the energy with which a man rises above the tides of the world in order that fate and actions may shape themselves instead of being shaped by all the mutable things of life? If a State could rise in the same manner above the bloody chaos of the world, to be perfected within its individual limitations despite all pressure from without, that State would be truly an apotheosis of manliness.

None can achieve the neutral type unless he has been hardened in the crucible of suffering, and unless he has trained himself, through defeat upon defeat, in the art of rising from prostration. None relinquishes the illusions of the lust for war of his own accord; even though he be crushed a thousand times, and be made to experience to the utmost the futility of the combat, "vengeance" is ever the first word that seeks its way to his lips as soon as he is again able to raise his head. He must go farther down and still farther into the nethermost depths of contrition.

No one knows what the neutral type implies who does not

know what it means, crushed utterly, to give up everything he has most ardently desired, and in the anguish of defeat to reach with love and yearning toward a life which in its grimness and desolation seems unworthy even of the most abject existence. Is not this courage to accept life as a sacrifice—this courage to reach for the last and the highest when all one's strength is exhausted by despair—the very test of manhood, for the individual as well as for the community? The man who has stood the test knows, at all events, how gropingly and childishly he faced life until his fate seized him with its final and hardest grip. The state which has not progressed so far still lives in a condition of waywardness and unreasonableness which is the mark of childhood.

But the neutral has not merely seen through and relinquished the illusion of the world's contest for power so as to proceed on the road towards fulfilment through an inner concentration of forces. He has also experienced the inner failure of all spiritual movements, and has given up taking sides with the one or with the other; he has cast all these things from him, to be destroyed by the great purifying altar-fire.

The neutral type bears the features of the international citizen. For until men have become themselves in faith and devotion, every thought of international citizenship is doomed to result in strife as before. Thus far, however, no nation has succeeded in achieving neutrality as a type. None are more remote from the breadth and potency of the world-citizen than those which are usually called neutral. Their features are blurred, and where they move in their remote corners of the world they resemble a recluse who, shut up in his own selfishness, has lost all living contact with things. They are blank and indifferent; as everyone must be wherever the uniting, creating, energising symbol has been destroyed.

What is it that has obscured the soul of the neutral and made him blind to the obvious fact that his relation to life is no mere

accident, no matter of expediency, no costume to be altered at pleasure? Why can he not see that it is a value sprung from suffering, that it is his path from possibility to reality, his last necessity and his message to mankind—not irresponsibility but responsibility? Why can he not see that his attitude is the symbol of eternity from which he grows and receives embodiment as a type? Why has he no faith in himself and in his type—as he must have who has felt the fire of eternity in his heart?

The revolutionary, who does not talk, but who acts, assumes a greater responsibility than the masters of big words. And he who does not interfere by means of actions, whose reach is limited, but by means of effluence, whose reach is unlimited, assumes a still greater responsibility. In the neutral type there germinates a more comprehensive transformation of terrestrial life than any that has yet occurred. Will mankind be capable of conquering its destructive instincts of violence, or will it go under like one who has attempted to lift a block too heavy for his strength, and who succumbs, crushed by its weight? Was it from cowardice that those who saw clearly hid his responsibility from the neutral's view, and offered him the illusion of nonentity and passivity, that he might continue to sleep peacefully? And was the crowd content with the gift because of its will to be deceived?

Was it, peradventure, not an enemy but a leader who put on the neutral his mark of shame? Indeed, it is easier to lead one depressed in the apathy of sexlessness than one who is seething with conscious and responsible virility.

## THE CRUCIFIX ON THE HIGH ALTAR

THE sign of renunciation of worldly things, of absolute devotion unto death, of a self-sacrifice that knows no limits—what symbol could be better calculated than that to unite the disrupted individual around a nucleus of essential value? And to rally the fighting masses on their road to the kingdom? The abysses of suffering and the heights of hope merged in that sign—the meekest and the hardest bowed before it, hermits and world conquerors; those who had experienced everything and those who knew nothing.

And more: when the table at which the bread was broken in mutual sacrifice and love in commemoration of the beloved master was substituted for the altar of incineration, was the temple then humanised? Was the temple then changed into a home? And at the same time was the home that is earth changed into a temple?

How is it, then, that no sign has divided men's souls and set nations at variance against one another as this sign has done? Man and all the world was to be purified from sanguinary instincts in the blood of the lamb, and the serpent whose head had been crushed by the herdsman would never again inject its venom. But is there any lion of the desert in whose trail more innocent blood has been shed than in that of the lamb? Has not the crucifixion of the flesh instilled more dangerous poisons into the heart of man than the gospel of the joy of life could ever do?

There have been times when I have pulled myself up from every night, as from a depth hitherto untried of hell, and when each day has sent me farther down into the valley of death. I have thought: What is the good of kicking against

the pricks? Life is suffering, and the only thing man can do is to give bread to the starving. Never did symbol-formation achieve a stronger hold on the life-mass than when the crucifix was raised to shed the glamour of holiness over the terror of suffering. But I have guarded myself against this thought, thinking: None is farther from being a master of life than he whose lips never smiled happily and whose laughter never rang with joy. And no falser symbol of life can be imagined than that which stigmatises the rapture of earthly life as sin and shame. For it is the joy and happiness of existing, of enjoying the fragrance of everything fragrant, that makes suffering creative. Just because the crucifix robbed suffering of its creative force, it made men's souls sterile and turned the world into a wilderness in which the wanderers were unable to find one another. Where the affirmation of life does not grow spontaneously, negation takes control—and with it violence and the craving for blood.

To modify and complete the symbol of death, a symbol of renewal was attached to it—the virgin with the child. But what is the happiness of motherhood unless the child pressed to the mother's heart is the fruit of an exuberance of the joy of life, a fruit of the earth? Is not the great, the marvellous thing to be found in the fact that life is ever kindled anew to atone for the suffering it has inflicted on its victims? The child is the sanctification of the cruelty of earthly bondage. If a woman were to give birth to a child conceived in indifference she would experience a greater emptiness than had the child been conceived in lewdness—and the sense of emptiness would weigh more heavily on her than any sense of shame. The most beautiful symbol of the fulfilment of human nature is the mother—and its most debasing symbol is the negation of motherhood.

Although the crucifix with its altar and its Mother-of-God was far from possessing the fullness of life that alone inspires unifying force, yet century after century it raised its claim to

be the one value capable of bringing salvation. It was the rock on which the kingdom was to be built, and there was no other path by which humanity could reach God. Was it to be wondered that the pure in mind rose in opposition, that those searching for truth exhorted men to battle, and that the peoples were disunited?

Is there perchance another, stronger reason for the disaster wrought through this sign?



## THE ULTIMATE TRUTH AND THE ULTIMATE LIE

No one can understand it who has not sat night after night by the death-bed of a loved being. But he who with his dearest friend—his sole and constantly fixed point in the ocean of feeling—has lived through the agonising hours of the journey of death, and minute after minute has felt the last, the great, the terrible thing closing in upon him, he understands it without words—from a mere hint. . . .

We reach in growing anguish after that which is leaving us—not after the poor human life that flickers and expires. Aye, to be born and die is the law of life; and we are not fools, revolting in imaginary power against the inevitable. We reach out after all that derived its substance and its value from that source of life which will have vanished when the day breaks. That our soul shall fade into a phantom life . . . that all which ferments with the rising sap shall be slain in its budding . . . that she will never again harvest where she sowed, nor gather roses where she pruned. . . . We do not revolt against these, the laws of time; we revolt in anguish and despair against the plunging of eternity into darkness. We grieve in burning bitterness over every moment lost, over every word that left a trace of harshness; it cannot be made good; it cannot be reached by a soothing hand; it happened in time and has now entered eternity. Life's foothold is pulled away, the void yawns vast and desolate, cold and appalling, as the boundless spaces on the other side of all that moves and breathes is born, dies, and changes. And yet it is not this; it is something else that matters in what now occurs. The only thing that matters.

As when the lake and the wood and the rocking boat and the fading sky and everything outside merged into the blue autumnal veil of haze—when everything became as a vision,

to be swept away by the faintest breath of the lulling wind—so vanishes all. It was not so important as it seemed during the day's struggle. Will peace come now? Shall we remain wanderers in the world although we have reached a world beyond the shifting multiplicity of what is visible? Shall we hear the sound and the voices of men and the sighing of the trees as we heard the strange call of an unknown bird at night-fall—far, far away? Or was it but the heart's last call of distress—that, too, far, far away? But neither is this sinking the thing that matters—that matters most.

We have, perhaps, experienced it before, as a hint, as an undercurrent when the days flowed on, as a note that lingered for a fleeting second when all strings had ceased to vibrate. When from the heights of ecstasy and with the heart's tense power of exaltation we reached for all the tremendous things beyond the limits of the human senses, it may have happened that the void quickened, that the cold was pervaded by a wave of warmth and the desolation was transformed into creative power. But, alas! there is so much to tempt the man whose blood is hot; he is too restless to linger in transterrestrial spheres.

But now—now, as all earthly things recede while she in whom their essence and their value is contained glides out into the void—now, now it will come to pass. . . . Soon the last rattle will cease and then it will happen wholly and irrevocably. . . .

Happiness, courage, joy, and energy radiated from communion with this being; and more intensely when the sting of suffering and the flame of sacrifice purified and redeemed the common days and years. Radiated from eyes shining as they met ours in trust and love—from hands that passed caressingly over our brow and set free the frozen waves of life—from a voice which from its loudest to its faintest note pulsed with the rhythm which is life's deepest secret. And now . . .

What happens now is the change of eternity into life. That which has been, which has been sown and reaped, is not destroyed; it grows in vanishing. Death has no power over life's ripest fruit of victory. There is but one thing that death can do; it can shift the vital centre from this one being to a world outside the bonds of earth. The more inexorably the rattle shakes body and soul, heralding the approach of death, the more radiantly does space glow with all the glory that makes life alluring. It glows not only with light and warmth and the most wonderful movements of the heart—this far-off world which until now lay inaccessible, wrapt in eternal cold; it glows with inspiring fire from the soul of the beloved and from the ecstatic flight to which she alone could lift the weary soul; it glows with that creative power which makes a human being of the struggle between earth and spirit, and which makes a human home of chaos—with that creative power which was nowhere but in her.

And our eyes are opened. . . .

Aye, we had longed ardently for a summer of paradisal fullness; for a day, for an hour when everything that separates is gone, and when loneliness has been conquered as utterly as if it had never been; for security beyond all flickering emotions, and for safety beyond all vicissitudes. . . . As if the earth could be cleansed of what is earthly, and as if the struggle against death could come to an end as long as the heart beats! Now we perceive that no fullness is attainable until the possibility of death itself lies beaten and conquered; we catch the breath of the last inscrutable mystery, and we see that nothing can conquer death but death itself. We lift the cup of life and hold it high—and we see that *the cup overflows when we least expect it*. . . .

Death makes earthly errors inaccessible to every change, and not only errors, but also the highest and the holiest things. When the last breath has been drawn the

change of eternity into life, the ultimate and sole essential experience, will have escaped the vagaries of change. As the spaces glow they will continue to glow. No human action reaches so far, no power of malice can extinguish the fire of eternity. We see that whatever we have done and thought and dreamt, we have always been building on this trans-terrestrial security, and our faith has become unshakable because it was reared on this rock. It is not in the world of change that we found our strength to live, but in this crystalline source which has only now gushed forth in its fullness. How strange that we did not die with thirst when, weary and dim-eyed, we had to content ourselves with a few trickling drops from the spring!

With a certainty which nothing can shake he who has experienced this knows that he has come as close to reality as it was vouchsafed to him to come.

It may happen that the watcher at the death-bed wearies as the hours of the night wear on, pulsing like a steamer on a stormy sea over which morning seems never to break; it may happen that thoughts come drifting like clouds over a starry sky, obscuring the sign of eternity; it may happen that among the drifting thoughts there is this one, to draw the soul down from the heights of reality:

“Suppose there should be born a human being with such overwhelming strength of love within him that he could embrace all the world and fill all men with that happiness of redemption with which even the greatest hitherto have been able to fill only one! He would go from land to land, from home to home, and reach even the most remote in unbounded sympathy and understanding; not his heart alone, but his thought also would find the right word for each and every one; so perfectly would he know all roads that he would never point out the same road for two different persons. He who met this

being would never forget his glance, and never lose the feeling of his firm and guiding hand upon the wrist. All would meet in their love of this one man; and though they did not know each other's tongues, they would understand each other perfectly. Suppose a man, through the effluence of his being, could thus realise union and communion between men . . .

"If this one man were some day snatched by death out of the reach of all vicissitudes and changes, there would be no eyes but would grow moist, and none but would pause in deepest gratitude in his work, and bow his head at the sound of his beloved name. Think, if the cold transterrestrial space should begin to shine with light and life and warmth as it shines over the individual, when it is filled with the spirit of the beloved—if it should begin to shine over all without exception, giving to all the inspiration and security they longed for, and all the loveliness of life. Think, if humanity through one human being were made to experience the miracle of communion and the victory over death, and could thus reach the solid ground on which to base the transformation of the world into a home!"

If, weary and exhausted, we glide off into dreams of happiness, and then sink down again from the heights towards the earth, it may happen, as in a spectral vision, that we see empty, staring eyes gazing up into the heavens in false ecstasy, and hear a word that sounds like bitter scorn: "That man has lived on the earth. So, exactly so, did he journey over the earth, redeeming all humanity. The Saviour of the World. . . ."

Here we come to the most essential point of existence, which is also the most dangerous point. Appearance and reality lie so close together here that the dividing-line is discernible only to the keenest eye, and can be drawn only by the most ruthless sincerity. The highest and the strongest, that which is well worthy of being called the bedrock of all things and the source of eternity, touches within a hair's-breadth the delusion which is the refuge of spiritual indolence and cowardice.

It is true that life may manifest itself and reach perfection in a human being: that this being may overcome death, and that his death may signify the change of eternity into life for those who belonged to him and partook of his being. It is true, also, that the effects of this transfusion may be so powerful that they reach others, and that mere hearsays of the miracle may prove a fountain of life to far-off strangers.

It may have happened at times that a man who wandered here in holiness, when dying caused the spheres to vibrate so deeply with his gentle spirit that the vibrations spread over wide countries and benefited generation upon generation. It is not impossible even that a human message may have illumined centuries with the high and glorious mystery of salvation, uniting the scattered, redressing the downtrodden, healing the sick, and solacing those consumed in themselves; it is even possible that this message may have had such an appeal for all that even the wise and the honest believed in its indestructible quality.

But it is not true that the "Saviour of the World" has been born.

As though this wretched world, writhing in pain and the agony of its own throes, had yet reached freedom and redemption; as though it had ever reached the road of salvation at all; as though it were not of necessity driven farther and farther away so long as men are being torn to pieces between their sterile joylessness and their longing for eternity, equally devoid of the blessing of fertility!

And it is not true that the "Saviour of the World" will ever be born.

The world can live only in terms of death and renewal as a rhythm. A "Saviour of the World" would also mean a destroyer of the world. The change of eternity into life in a form given

for all times would signify simply the unchangeableness of fixation—eternal death. The world must for ever be renewed by those who have attained freedom, and who will confer their joy and their eternity upon humanity as a heritage. Salvation does not lie in the achievement of the individual, nor even in his sacrifice; it lies in the fulfilment of the rhythm of death and renewal.

The salvation achieved once for all is the most comfortable and seductive of all easy roads to salvation; at the same time it is a more dangerous road than any other, for it blunts the noblest passion implanted in the heart of man—the passion in love for one being to achieve union so perfect and complete as to span all eternity. Loneliness is death from which love, renewing love, takes its rise. He alone who has experienced loneliness, the complete loneliness to be found only in a world without a saviour, will experience the renewal of love to the full.

## THE CATASTROPHE

As if the hidden crimes of men and all they had sought to escape by lying had suddenly been revealed . . . the catastrophe came, and there yawned the abyss towards which the world had been blindly rushing, hunted and driven on by the nightmare of competition and development. It came not like the things within the control of mortals, nor like a volcanic eruption. Roused from their death-sleep of centuries, with its dreams of power and glory, men's eyes were opened and they saw. . . . They were struck with awe by what they saw, unable to understand that they had not always seen. . . .

That they had not always seen that no world can subsist where spiritual leadership is gone and the spirit itself has vanished; where wisdom has withered under the burden of learning, and where education has aimed at everything except that plasticity of the soul which is a necessary condition of every affirmation of life; where prophets juggle with words and martyrs are celebrities; where all the enthusiasm of youth has been crushed between the will to succeed and the desire to be like everybody else. . . . Can the life-mass of an individual live and move, rise in consciousness of self, and be renewed in faith, if the individual has lost all ways by which to reach the fountains of life, and the very organs with which to dip in their water? How, then, could the life-mass of nations and races live under those conditions?

Where in this restless, jangling world was the great stillness, without which none can grow into a seeing, understanding being? Where were the pilgrims of holiness irradiating this stillness, and where were the temples in which souls could rest in stillness without being pestered with the magical gods and their agents? Where was the space in union with trans-



terrestrial worlds, where the human crowd, cleansed of all that is proper to the crowd, could breathe and be exalted by a common faith in common happiness? Where was that eagerness with eyes uplifted that makes the cup of life to overflow; where the prayer which is not a crying in the wilderness but a triumphant understanding?

Where was the power to distinguish between reality and appearance which, through knowledge and understanding, strikes its roots in the will to holiness and the harmony with eternity—the power to distinguish between good and evil known only to the fervent heart that does not shrink from the heaviest responsibility of evaluation? Where was the assurance and conviction which does not hesitate in the face of a decision, though the world should hang on the decision, and be lost if it be false? Where was the firmness that renders intention secure, and where the security that never swerves? Where was the rock in the deluge from which no maelstrom of change could suck away those once saved from the depths?

Where in this weary world, degraded by squabbles and bickerings, was there a body of leaders who had eyes to see that which must come to pass, and a voice to proclaim the great demand for adaptation? Who could show the millions the road to the stairs of sacrifice, beside which there is no road to the earthly common home—not to speak of the spirit that could burn the millennial walls of death and that had the spiritual power, in defiance of all the world, to kindle the fire of holiness?

A force of life oppressed and trampled upon becomes a road of death and destruction.

How was it possible that they never saw? . . . When the power of sacrifice—that wondrous, inevitable movement for ever active in the very heart of life, the depth in which suffering is turned into bliss, struggle into reconciliation, and death into renewal—is no longer cultivated and cherished by every

individual, in every home, and by society as a whole; when sacrifice is not lifted up by chosen spirits into a realm of purity whence show and deceit are banished; when, as the highest form of sacrament, it is not allowed to give all life the character of sacrament—then it is doomed to turn into a power of devastation, and all sacrificial fire will become a devastating world-conflagration. For then sacrifice, degraded and profaned in madness, becomes the most useful instrument of violence for those greedy for power, and the people's most welcome means of gratifying its desire to be deceived.

The catastrophe happened. . . . Their eyes were opened. And they saw. . . .

Where spirit and holiness have been lost contrasts cannot be solved in reconciliation. Where the will to sacrifice our own privileges for the benefit of others does not point out the road towards a commonweal beyond the limits of selfishness, there the will to sacrifice becomes but a driving force towards a common hell. "Not for the sake of force, but force itself thou shalt sacrifice"; thus has sounded the voice of humanisation in all times, in every human breast, and in every people which through suffering has reached the right path. But through its effluence the monument of world-power inculcated its "blood and iron" in every self-sacrificing mind—drowning the voice of the yearning heart, the claims of reflection, and even the distressed call of the blood. To the fire with all considerations—with all our fathers wrought for the good of their posterity—with all work dutifully and faithfully done! Away with the past and with the future! The madness waxes. To the fire with all sacrificing youth, with the flower of the race, and the hope of universal redemption; to the fire with everything—everything—everything! For everything must be consumed for the sake of . . .

For the sake of counterfeit gods! For wooden images! For dead symbols!

Their eyes were opened and they saw: "Sacrifice yourself for the emperor!"—"Die for the Flag!"—"Your country calls you!"—"God's will!"—"Freedom!" and so on. "The victory of democracy!"—"The lions of the Empire!" Conflicting symbols rose in everybody's way, and there was no escape. But they did not rise as living things, bringing happiness and renewal to longing men. Out of sentimental routine and spiritual indolence, out of sloth and inhibitions and imitation and the instincts of the masses they rose, like the idols of savage peoples, clamouring for blood, blood, more blood. Was there no power strong enough to check the self-destruction?

Power? No. Now that their eyes were open they perceived that the very idea of power had vanished, and that everything had been changed into a relentless *must*. Neither an individual nor a group, nor a people, nor all the wise and good left on the earth, could check the downward whirl of everything into the abyss. They had destroyed the path of sacrifice which alone leads to the power of redemption. And out of the death of this power the demon of force raised its head to control the world. Class hatred and class struggle. All divided and powerless in themselves, and spreading division and powerlessness in ever-widening circles. Blood, blood, more blood. . . .

Then the catastrophe came: war, pestilence, famine, the dictatorship of the proletariat, the terror—men had to look death in the face. Not only the death of their loved ones and their own lonely graves, but the death of society, the death of all noble efforts, the death of culture. But when their eyes were opened and they saw the roads of death, did they then, perhaps, discover life? No, they discovered nothing. They rushed on—and on. . . .

## THE CALL OF THE EARTH

**LISTEN!** Can you hear the happy ring of devotion in the song of the endless lines of men with flower-crowned arms marching out to face the fire? Note the confidence, firm as a rock, of high and low as they sacrifice on the altar of their country all the things dearest to them, and note the burning faith of those who a while ago believed in nothing—note the fluttering emotion of hearts dried up. . . .

It is spreading abroad; it is eating its way into the heart of humanity. . . . Trenches all along frontiers heretofore untouched—extending across the plains, ploughing their way through the woods, ascending the highest mountain ranges—fresh crowds to be thrust into the fire—no ocean too wide for the sparks to reach the other shore—ribbons of lead cut into balls and giant guns turning on lathes in factories lately so peaceful—barrage fire—shells—tanks—blood—rags—barbed wire—spies on the gallows—ships split in two—wind-driven ghosts drifting in endless procession over desolate plains—

I crossed country upon country—in search of him who had heard the call of the earth.

I sought him among the learned. But their learning left them no time to listen. I sought him among poets and writers. But they had heard nothing but the hymn in honour of the war and the curses lavished on its leaders. Among those who loudly proclaim the gospel of Love and who view the war as an expression of God's inscrutable grace; but how could they feel the pain of the earth? I sought him on the battlefields and in the barracks of the wounded. And at last:

Groaning multitudes of men who had escaped death at the front to suffer instead the death of the spirit. Room after room

in stifling summer heat, ward upon ward, house after house crowded with them; one haunted by sanguinary visions, and even in sleep reaching after his neighbour's throat; another shaking day and night with the terror of death; the next, stupefied, staring mutely at the ceiling. One of them sits up in bed, opens his eyes wide and announces as though he were speaking to all the world: "I heard a voice from the earth—it came from the earth—it was the earth calling—it was calling to me: 'You shall drop your gun—you shall tell the others to drop their guns—and to run home'; it was the earth calling—but they did not believe me—and I dropped my gun, and I got up and called as the earth told me; I called to the others, telling them also to drop their guns; and then I ran—then I ran—and then—well, that is all I know—and then I came here." Sneers and coarse laughter drowned the words of the prophet.

I have found what I sought, and I wander on, that the call of the earth may burn itself into my heart . . . day after day I walk on the battlefields. I stumble over barbed wire, hiding its network among thistles and weeds where formerly fruits glistened and the corn stood waving. I follow shell-torn roads that end in flooded valleys. I smell corpses where the crosses stand close together like pine saplings in a plantation. A thin smoke is rising from the charred woods on the heights. Bare black trunks are outlined against the sky where the summer wind soughed in the luxuriant crowns of the beech-trees. Wreckage everywhere. And here and there a forgotten corpse.

I ascend paths winding between mountains of mortar and bricks, where but lately streets and market-places teemed with life. Empty window-frames in shell-torn walls stare at the desolation. A sign here and there names somebody who was, but is no more. Everything is dead and silent, as though the ruins had been excavated from age-old desert sand.

There stood a temple on the summit of the hill crowned by the city. Blocks and volutes, angels and madonnas and heaps

of stained glass in all colours cover the ground under the crumbled vaults. . . . There stands a signpost in the centre of the stone heap under the broken chancel roof—or is it an axe that gleams at the cross-bar of the post? Has revolution followed in the track of war and left this sign among its remnants? I seek my way forward as though crossing a mountain avalanche of stone. Dust whirls where lonely winds come sweeping through the ruins. I pause—and see fragments of the World's Redeemer hanging on the broken altar cross. He stretches out one arm; not like the seer who points onward, but like a beggar asking for a drink of mercy; the other arm disappeared among the rubbish when the shell tore away one half of the cross.

The earth called for life and beauty and holiness. There grew vineyards and rose-gardens out of the desert, and hills were crowned with cities, with towers and spires and temple cupolas. But as if they regretted that they had listened to the call of the earth, men unleashed their wrath again to destroy the sacrament concluded between them and the earth.

The earth called for love, and men followed in the footsteps of the prophet of love, to carry out his will. But instead they changed the world as far as the cross reached into a battlefield studded with graves. Do you not hear the crying and wailing, the curses rising from the depths of history, and from all those murdered in the name of the cross? But now the cross has been smashed to pieces and the volcano of the souls has shaken the ground, vomiting its lava streams. A last sigh escapes the lips of the Redeemer of the World. He does not beg for a drink; he begs for death: "Let me die at last and vanish from the face of this earth, where all crimes are perpetrated in my name, and where souls are robbed of their treasure in my honour."

The earth called for freedom. As though all fields and forests and villages and alleys had heard its call, revolution passed

jubilant and myriad-headed over the lands. Joy and faith in the future sprang up in its trail. But the star of renewal was not given it as a symbol—the guillotine was raised as its symbol. The mob smelled blood and became drunk with the blood streaming from the scaffold. Mad with their sense of power, and believing themselves the redeemers of the world, they became destroyers of the earth. See the symbol! And see the rubbish from which it springs as a symbol of the demolished world!

The earth called for peace. . . .

Do you not hear how the devastated lands cry as the passion-racked body cries in its loneliness and woe, and as the tortured heart cries for solace and help? What is the booming of guns, the crash of crumbling cities, and the weeping of crowds in flight, compared to the cry of the earth? That which quakes to-day with hatred and suffering will to-morrow be silenced by the demand of new wills. But as the earth cries to-day, it will cry a thousand years from now—nay, as long as there remains a crawling life among its clefts to hear its call.

Wake, then, all you who were born in the great moment of decision, and who saw the sign that sprang from the calling, bleeding, trembling earth, to bear witness for all time to *humanity's first great common experience in joy and pain*! Harken to the call of the sign where it stands indicating the road: "Hither did the way lead; here came those who wandered in blindness—a furious, bloody pageant led on from lie to lie by those greedy for power, with those who wished to be deceived, dancing in glorification of magical gods; yonder it goes—on and on—until the earth has been changed into a devil's isle of the spaces where those banished from eternal life are hurled, that crime may not breed crime in all eternity."

## THE WAITING SIBYL

SHE stood beside the conqueror on the ruins of Carthage. And when she saw tears glistening in his eyes she whispered: "O wretched son of Rome, blinded by victories, poisoned by the thirst for power, you are capable of all things—except of stilling the voice of the heart! Rome has spread curses as far as her armies have reached. But could you see what evil her heritage will send down through the ages to every people her spirit touches, you would entreat heaven to weep warning tears of blood, and the earth to tremble, that it might arouse the sleeping and show the waking that they are building on volcanic soil. Poor man—how would your noble heart burn within you, were you able to see! . . ."

She saw the altar-fire extinguished among the columns on the seashore, and she saw the sunny Olympian gods driven down into the shades of Orcus. She was silent, for she knew that the temples were there to be transformed into temples for new gods. But when she saw the martyr of the "faith that was to save the world" preparing amidst the cheers of the people to enter the arena where the hungry lions waited, she could not restrain a sigh of compassion: "O, wretched one, in vain you sacrifice yourself for the love of your master, and in vain you die for love's mystery! You think you can crush the power of Rome in the name of the cross. But with her unconquerable will to power, Rome will use your symbol as a pretext to spread the message of power and violence to peoples and countries she would never have reached by her own power. And wherever you extinguish the altar-flame she will turn your action to her own profit, saying: 'Why should you consume yourself in sacrifice where you might conquer by force? Behold, victory is yours through him who conquered death! Follow him!' Wretch that you are, by your sacrifice you will



forge chains for all the world, and with your truth you will sow the thistles of lies in every land! Rome will turn your love into cruelty, and with streams of poison from the inexhaustible well of her greed for power she will infect the souls of nations and drive them like madmen to murder each other in a struggle for world supremacy. From your faith she will derive strength to keep this madness alive; and the struggle for deliverance of the pure-minded will be as futile as that of convicts trying to rend their chains." The sibyl saw the martyr die, and thought: "Long—long shall I have to wait. . . ."

She stood at the gates of Rome when the earth trembled under the horses of the barbarians; she glimpsed the hope of freedom when savage hordes poured among marble-topped hills, and the valleys echoed with the crash of crumbling temple pillars. Perhaps . . . Through drunken hosts she made her way to the conqueror, and the words came rushing over her lips as if hounded by anguish: "You did not call me. You do not want to hear me. Aye, could you kill my prophecy as easily as you could kill my body! You believe you have conquered. Fool! With the force of her steel-strung will Rome will penetrate into your soul, and *you* shall fall a victim to all that brought about *her* downfall. Where you sit looking in icy scorn at the beaten foe you are possessed of that demon of power which roused all the power of the world to onslaught; you shall be possessed by that demon of self-destruction which Rome nourished at her breast, and which in the end proved stronger than herself. When you think you are greatest, and when you think you hold in your hand the world supremacy to which Rome taught you to aspire, the word 'fall!' will ring and echo in the sky over your head, and you shall stumble upon your own sword. For self-annihilation is the heritage of Rome. Woe unto all who, like Cæsar, are doomed to hand on this heritage to new peoples!"

The sibyl watched time pass, and saw how everything turned out sevenfold worse than she had prophesied. Never

yet did the sun of happiness rise over a nation with waves of strength from hitherto sterile soil but that nation was seized by the demon of force and the lust of suppression, and rushed forth on the path of conquest—towards self-annihilation. Never did one nation learn from another, and never did the masses learn from the individual. Never was an enfranchised people, in its longing for purity and redemption, moved to say, like one who finds himself: "I will be what I am, and I desire nothing but to do some good to others." . . . Waiting seemed long to the sibyl.

But as one downtrodden by injustice abides the day when his innocence shall be made manifest, thus the sibyl waited, ardently, century after century, that her prophecy might be fulfilled and that she might see mankind delivered from Rome's dominion. Every time a wave of rapture and renewal swept over the world her heart was thrilled anew: "Now—now it will come!" But that earthly joy could break the chains forged by dreams of heaven, and the desire for knowledge rouse thought from its secular sleep—anything could happen but that. Never could the spirit of communion tear down the dead walls raised between peoples by their lust for power; never did a mighty wave rush forth from its depths to sweep all that divided them down into the fire of sacrifice. Of what avail is the contrition that rends the walls of the heart when nothing else avails? It could never revive the "sacrificial power of the vanquished" in the soul of a people; even unto death they kept rattling their unremitting: "Power! Revenge! We are the appointed masters of the world!"

*And then it came. . . .*

Ah, with what awe did the sibyl watch the approach of predestined collapse which had been hanging over the world for thousands and thousands of years! The cries of victory cut through her soul like cries of anguish; and, appalled, she saw armies of alien races pour forth over the lands. When the

temple walls were rent, and the Golgotha darkness grew denser, half-forgotten visions of Rome's destruction rose before her eyes. "What will happen? The earth ravaged by crime and dried up to the point of loathing has no strength to bear new nations to receive the heritage of those that have withered away. Not as when Rome was destroyed. . . ." But from the gathering dusk and the harassing anguish the star of renewal rises in the sky of the future. "Now—now—now or never. . . ."

The sibyl follows the armies over land and sea, and her tense anticipation increases each time it seems that the horror of defeat or the delusion of victory might shake the battling hosts into consciousness. "Now the moment has come—now they will make the sacrifice, the great, the glorious sacrifice that overcomes death in the heart of man! Now the ideal of force will vanish in the flames of communion! Now a purified humanity will rise from common contrition, and brothers will clasp each other's hands! Now the childhood of mankind, spent in a frenzy of bloody desires, and stumbling in unconscious darkness, passes into wide-awake, dignified manhood! Thinkers will arrive, not to gibber the folly of the past, but to carve new commandments on new tablets; and with new strength new men will direct the nations towards new ideals—now! Now the vastness of space will open over a new paradise where man, healed of violence and dissension, ascends by measured steps toward new forms of holiness. The world, emerging from a death the like of which has never been seen, moves toward renewal!"

But the farther the sibyl wanders, and the more she sees, the deeper sinks her hope; and her tremulous, "now—now!" becomes again a waiting for a distant future.

Like a shadow of history she glided beside me as I wandered over the ravaged battlefields, and I heard her breathing when nothing else was heard in the wide mansions of death. And

when I saw the new symbol arise on the grave of the modern world, I heard her whisper in my ear :

“O man, too strong in your faith, who never could learn that the ephemeral spirit of the age must struggle and die like everything subject to the law of time ! You have waited like myself and hoped like myself. And, like me, you have believed in a revival coming from depths which only few can attain, and in a cleansing from crimes interwoven with the most secret roots of life. The sound of your message will die away in that void of folly where all messages have died away. Nations are subject to the law of gravity as they are subject to the law of time ; and no levers can prevent them from sinking into ever deeper damnation.

“They do not believe in everlasting punishment, nor in eternal death. They do not see that the threads of world destruction were spun in timeless space behind them, and they do not see that the results of world destruction extend through timeless space before them. They do not feel how all that has been burns in their souls, and how every day and every hour is charged with the burden of the past. And when they groan in suffering they do not understand that it is the suffering of the future that stings them and makes them groan. Did they never see a father bear the suffering of his son when the son suffered for the father’s sins ? No, they neither feel nor see anything ; least of all that their lack of feeling and seeing means eternal death. Nothing can lift them up towards freedom, and nothing can frighten them into repentance. I have waited long enough ; I can wait no more.” And the sibyl disappeared.

Desolation spread over the world as never before.

## THE HERITAGE OF EVERY MAN

SIN and shame and humanity's burden of false values are the heritage of every man. But there have lived those whose paths were straight, and who gave new generations simple truths as a heritage to guide them through all the perplexities of life. When I laid my ear to the track of the world, seeking to hear the voice of that striving force of righteousness which has become a living force to direct the masses, I heard these words :

“Thou shalt not murder, neither with thy hand nor with thy speech, nor with the thoughts of thy heart.”

Neither shall you look up to those who from unbridled lust for power murdered the millions of the battlefields, whether they ended on imperial thrones or died on the scaffold; still less to the sowers of the seed of discord, who murdered the spirit of communion between the peoples; least of all to those who distracted the heart of man with vanity and murdered its dormant capacity for happiness. You shall instead choose those for leaders who are strong in action, gentle in demeanour, forgiving in their hearts, and righteous in all things.

“Thou shalt not lie; for the way of truth is the way of life.”

The coward tries to escape the consequences of his deeds through lying, and flees from reality into illusion. But you shall conquer cowardice, and daily practice the virtue of courage. The highest things are not to be attained along crooked paths, but only by following in the footsteps of those who lived and died for the sake of truth.

“Thou shalt not steal.”

Not as the thief does, nor as usurers or clever go-betweens; not like him who in luxury, indolence, and wantonness squanders the source of riches intended as the heritage of all. More: your contempt for theft shall be so great that you would not even wish to steal as the tree would steal if it forbade man to reap the fruits it bears by the grace of nature.

“Thou shalt hallow the day of labour with thy labour and the day of rest with thy rest.”

He who restlessly seeks diversion not only scatters his days as the wind scatters the fallen leaves—he dissipates his soul as the wind dissipates the sailing cloud. But he who achieves healing and sanctifying repose in himself builds up his work even in resting, as nature builds up his body in sleep. And all building is holy, whether it aims at temples and the renewal of the world or only at the treasures of the humble and his temporal welfare.

“Thou shalt honour him who is above thee, and so arrange thy life that thy father and thy mother may rejoice that they bore thee.”

Towards your superior, do your duty! Towards him who is ahead of you in wisdom, bow your head! Towards him whom your sense of community chose for a leader, offer, as a gift, that humility of heart which only great devotion fosters! Towards your father and mother, the one or the other or the third—which one of the three depends not on you but on them. But if they stand in your way in your search for the one thing essential, then you may go your own way—that they may die assured of not having barred your way.

“Thou shalt be on thy guard against dissoluteness and unchaste thoughts.”

Nothing is seductive as passion, and nothing so destructive as lewdness. When a man is drawn towards a woman, and a

woman towards a man, let them test that which is happening on the touchstone of communion, and not on that of emotional intoxication. If they find that they belong together only in loneliness and human weakness, they must condemn themselves, but forgive each other. And, above all, let them not violate the holy name of love. All are not born ascetics, but all are born for truth.

“Thou shalt guard thy speech and keep thy body clean.”

If your foot be unclean, your hand is liable to become unclean also. Similarly the hidden stain of the soul spreads to that which is visible. If you offer your friend an unclean hand, you cannot expect a loyal handshake in return. If you offer him a foul word in addition, he does right to leave you utterly. For, like the thistle, a foul word grows where nothing else can grow, and, like the thistle, it is ineradicable once it has secured a hold.

“Thou shalt be frugal and contented and provide for those that are dependent on thee; for only the contented have what they need, and only they that give spread benediction.”

The wise man is sparing with words, not from miserliness, but in order that each word that comes from his lips may have the weight of gold and be strongly effectual; he is a poor worshipper of beauty who squanders his means of expression. Each coin you save bears witness to your wish to act justly toward yourself and others; and your inheritance represents the wear and tear of your ancestors and their care for your welfare. In respecting it you respect them. Frugality is the friend of wisdom, beauty, and reverence. He who practises frugality has always something to give to others, and a giver is the friend of all.

“Thou shalt rejoice at thy neighbour’s prosperity, and not exalt thyself if thine own should increase.”

He who in cold calculation and greed impoverishes others impoverishes himself; while his riches increase, thanks to his harshness and coldness, his heart shrinks, and he loses his capacity for enjoying what he has gained. But he whose sense of communion with his fellow-workers becomes as strong as the mother's sense of communion with her child rejoices over the success of others as the mother rejoices over that of her child. He who is unable to rejoice is poorer than the beggar who can enjoy the warmth of the sun and the flowers of the field; and he who can rejoice at everything good is well on his way to perfection.

"Thou shalt care for all living things, and never injure an animal or a plant unless the necessity of life demands it."

You shall make of earth an altar consecrated to the highest, and not a day shall pass without your consuming yourself in the fire of earthly demands, and without your being filled with gratitude that it was granted you to taste the sweetness of earthly felicity. Thus you will spread the spirit of reconciliation and become one of those that make of earth a loved home.

If you keep these commandments you may not, therefore, be more successful than others. But you will gain that which endures when riches and honour pass. You will gain rest in your soul, and become a force of life for all who know your name. And when death at last calls you, you will go to meet eternity trustfully and calmly.



## THE DEMANDS OF HOLINESS

"THOU shalt have no gods—that thy heart be not captured in bondage. But in everything thou shalt look for the divine—that thy heart may preserve its freedom."

"Strange are the ways of the Lord," say the old. And the young add: "But stranger still are the ways of the devil." Strangest of all, however, is the miracle that made evil a living impetus, and changed the demon of destruction into a spirit of world-renewal. May your heart be filled with the awe of searching, and may the miracle of deification choose it for its abode.

"Thy faith shall be certainty and thy work a prayer."

If anyone should throw into your face: "This is madness," you shall not return the insult with a similar arrogant word. It is not for you to reveal truth and convert those who wronged you. You shall leave this to that same order and eternity of things that once opened your eyes and gave you a faith as firm as a rock. And if he adds: "You are a seducer of youth!" you shall await patiently the moment when the hardened heart shall be roused to life by the power of truth, and when the abuse is silenced by the joy of redemption.

"Thou hast no more right to a thing than thou hast power to redeem it—and thou shalt not arrogate to thyself a right that is not thine."

To redeem a woman is not to rouse her desire and to gratify her passion; it is to redeem her from the solitude in which her being lies dormant as life lies dormant in matter. He who makes the earth rich with grain becomes a helper of

the earth; but only he who sheds the light of holiness on every path he treads becomes a force that may redeem the earth.

"If thy heart be restless, nothing shall thwart thy searching effort. If thy heart has peace, nothing shall disturb that peace."

Never is death deadlier than when it steals into your searching to dissolve your thoughts into futile brooding and to petrify your faith into idle dogmas. And never is death more insidious than when it invades your stillness, making the stagnant water appear as the source of the depths. Many a man when searching for God has stranded in the slack-water of brooding and dogma. Your searching and your stillness shall shine with the holy glamour of victory over death.

"Thou shall resist evil and atone not only for thy own offences but also for those of others."

Resist—but not as the dead wall resists the onslaught, stimulating the aggressive forces to further efforts. Did you never experience the silent resistance of a living work, and of an indefatigable heart? And did you never see the forces of evil defeated in its presence? The world was changed and lifted up by those who burnt with eagerness to sacrifice themselves and to die the death of atonement—not by those who searched for a saviour.

"Thou shalt bear thyself in loneliness, but allow thyself to be uplifted by thy union with another."

If you seek to associate purity with living life, you will be left alone among the many. For the pure man, as a rule, is not alive, and the live man, as a rule, is not pure. But should you meet a man who changes the living flame of lust into love's flaming fire of sacrifice, be not hesitating in your

devotion. The will of manliness is to vindicate that which is strong; the will of womanliness is to minister to the weak. Only beyond both of these is there fulfilment of life.

“Thy purity shall not be the purity of one unaffected by the world, nor shall it be the purity of fire. It shall be—thy purity.”

When the saints of olden times had ceased to be tempted by the devil, they ceased to be saints and became self-mutilators. And when the sun-heralds of our times no longer hold the sword of distinction in their hands on their pilgrimage through dark worlds, they will have forfeited their citizenship in the kingdom of holiness. The tension of the forces of life is the path of holiness; the transformation of tension into redeeming power is the aim of holiness. You shall become a road that has never existed, and an aim that none has seen.

“Thou shalt not build thy life on escape from death; thou shalt build it on renewal through death.”

Only the one who has died in the contrition of his heart can rise in the freedom of the heart. But he who on that account makes the contrition of the heart and the loveliness of the tear-brimmed eye a permanent expression of his spirit resembles the man who would force the flower to bloom with no sun. Happiness is holier than sorrow. And the holiest of all things is the exulting joy that fills all the heavens.

“Thou shalt not impose on others what thou thinkest right. But thy life shall be such that everyone who sees thee pauses to reach out towards life as the highest good.”

Did you hear?—“everyone.” Not only those who love you and believe in you, being children of the same spirit as yourself, but also those who understand your nature no more than you understand the song of a singing bird. Or do you think

that that which grows and creates and dies and renews itself eternally and indefinitely cares for understanding in the turbulent life of the worlds?

“The lower commandment yield to the higher demand. But even the highest demand yield to this injunction: ‘Behold man!’ ”

Did not the prohibition to murder always yield to the demand of the country—not only with the approval of the ambitious, but also with that of the righteous? The worlds are renewed in man. If you deny by commandments and demands man’s power for renewal you violate the highest. But only he to whom the responsibility of freedom is more binding than all commandments can grasp the meaning of this injunction.

The river of suffering that flows in the depths belongs to time; its destructive power cannot reach you as you cross the high-spanned bridge of holiness. There are no limits to the vistas that opens up before your eyes. The moment when earthly life comes to an end does not appal you. You have not only found the way—you have become the way.

## WHEN LIFE IS AT STAKE

HAVE you been at sea with fishermen when a storm was gathering, while the darkness drew on and the utmost beacon was being lighted far away in the east? Did you notice the silence then, the great silence that falls when it is no longer either the catch or even the profit that is at stake, but life itself? The sea is never more desolate. And the evening sky with its pale stars is deep like infinity.

Without a word the man who holds the tiller cedes his place to the old fellow who makes his way to the stern on gouty legs. As if anticipating his wishes, each man tackles his task. Sails are hoisted and reefed, pulleys squeak, ropes are made taut; when his work is finished each man sits quiet in his place until he is needed again.

There may be bickering and wrangling when there is no danger in sight; it does not matter then who steers or whether a short tack is taken or not. But when the weal and woe of all are at stake power devolves on him who has the power. And the old man has shown before that he can manage a rising storm better than anyone else. But the duty of obedience devolves on him who does not possess this power. "If the old man cannot do it, none of us can," thus think the younger members of the crew. And silently they watch from their posts for the old man's nods. Therein lies their own strength.

The old fisherman surveys the seas as a ruler surveys his enemies. He cannot bid the waves be still instead of rising against him with their crenelated walls of foam; he cannot rebuke the winds and command them to cease tearing at his tackle and shrouds, jeopardising the masts. But as by a miracle the frail cockle-shell, instead of being engulfed as the huge

walls of water rush onwards, keeps tossing on the crests of the waves. The old man sits as though he were asleep with open eyes. But he is not asleep; he is alive to a thousand things, while those who appear awake see only one.

Not as a result of emulation or decision, not because of the privilege of age or riches, not because of a promise to steer as the majority wish it, or by eloquence, favour, illusions, artifices, lies, and all the other determining factors in the crowd's struggle for power, does he sit there, a mediator between man and the elements; but only because of the inescapable fact of the power that redeems, and before which all that is unreal evaporates and comes to naught when death reaches out its hand to clutch. . . .

Century after century men called for a master, and when one millennium sank into its grave, the call sounded over the boundary into the next. "I reach out for thee, O Lord! Thou art my sole hope and the sole light upon my path. Before Thee I will prostrate myself in the dust, and wherever I find a trace of Thy splendour I will water the earth with tears of gratitude." But when the power of redemption reached them in human form, and they beheld the mediator who could quench the fire of passion by laying his hand upon their heads, and who could lift the common craft out of the depth of the waves and make it prevail over the storm, they cried: "No, we want to be masters ourselves. We do not want to recognise an ordinary human being as master, but only him who can work miracles."

The ocean of fate wherein worlds are shaped is swelling with mighty waves. Like scattered bits of wreckage peoples and states drift shoreward; and the waves are tinged with blood. It is no longer a matter of being the first to reach foreign lands and to overpower those whose weapons are inferior. What is left of the cargo is pitched overboard and swallowed up

by waves which have already swallowed many old dreams. The grip of death tightens, and the icy chill of death pervades all souls. Nothing but humanisation can save humanity. On us the responsibility has been placed: On those that have redeeming power *the responsibility of power*; and on those that have not redeeming power *the responsibility of obedience*.

Darkness increases, and the sea rises higher. The lighthouse comes nearer and nearer and changes into a flaming sword that pierces chaos where heaven and earth merge. Of what use is the lighthouse? It signifies not only—"Come this way! Here is safety!" It signifies also: "Keep off! Put to sea! There are hidden rocks here." Many have turned back from fear of the homeward road, to be tossed about out yonder—until it was too late.

But the old man fears neither darkness nor shoals; nor is he afraid to come so close to the rocks that their polished ledges gleam forth out of the breakers' foam. At last he reaches the bay on the farther side of the tremendous break-water formed by the cliffs, and races on at a mad speed. The sweeping hurricane lifts the boat and carries it over sheets of water where no waves interfere with its course.

The sky begins to lighten over the distant shore. Lights twinkle from huts on the beach and from boats that move towards the river or put out to sea. A quavering note is heard from a bell-buoy; more and more lighthouses appear; a huge ungainly hulk nearby howls hoarsely. Nobody stirs. And the old man sits as before, as if sleeping with wide-open eyes.

Boats swarm between shores where houses with rows of shining windows rise in a cluster on rounded hills. Smoke belches forth and hammers are pounding. Fires flame among iron keels in the shipyards; cranes creak, piles of coal are

smoking, and serpents of light coil from the lamps on the quays. There are launches crowded with men, trawlers, barges—all whistling, puffing, heaving, and groaning. But safely as he steered it through the storm and the surf the old man steers his craft through the bustle of the harbour. . . .

When will there come a day when this world has become a symbol of communion like the boat that struggles with the storm?





## **PART IV**

# **THE LIFE-MASS AND THE DEATH-MASS**



## DAWN

WHY do you always mock me, O dawn?

You were my longing and my hope during the wandering days of youth. Often I mounted the heights at night to see you kindled over great cities. My heart fluttered with awe when the dim light filled with the murmur of awakening throngs upon the shores of the river. And as though nothing could satiate them my eyes drank in all that came into view out of the dispersing darkness. Roofs and towers shone, spires flashed, and the silvery water glistened far below me. My trembling awe grew as you grew, wonderful dawn! And then, at last, the dome of the temple on the height above all heights changed into a radiant monition of heaven, and the waxing light was filled with the pure vibrations of chiming bells. . . .

O days of youthful waiting for life's wonder! . . . As a wanderer through space I had seen the earth emerge from chaos, and my blood had known its tempting joys. I was filled to the brim with the faith of the unswerving, and all the dreams of daybreak were fraught with beauty. I was afraid to touch the seething possibilities of formlessness, lest, through want of understanding, I should anticipate their taking form and cause my faith to come to shame. But, at the same time, out of the harassing anguish of formlessness, I reached for the whole world in communion with which the miracle of self was to be realised; there was nothing that I did not love, and there was nothing that I did not yearn to reach.

Why did you deceive me, dawn? Why did you promise me the glory of the sun, the pregnancy of fertile countries and the blessing of full communion? Though you knew . . .

As when hell's armies of contending wills, of confused souls and angry fools and possessed martyrs are let loose . . . they swarm and howl, they shout and preach and jangle, they creep and crawl . . . the city rises out of the morning mist, and every least fragment of this tainted bit of earth mocks purity and violates the claim of holiness. . . .

As when the city, out of the illusive dawn, wakes to an active day, so must I from the trans-terrestrial clair-obscuré of youth wake to the reality of earthly life. O hours of horror and nights of anguish, when all that was of value broke down, and when my groping hands groped in vain in the dark! But alas! it had to be. With every vision that passed before my eyes, with every drop of my blood I was tied to this world; with every muscle-fibre tense and cramped I had to bear her burden of guilt and crime; as the world was crushed by the weight of the burden, so was I. . . .

Was it a flight from reality and a hunting for illusion when, wounded to death, but still having faith in the miracle, I took refuge in the rose-garden behind the tall hedge of spruce and let the world pass by me like the people on the road outside? No! I wanted to drink renewal from the sacrament of the earth, and I wanted to be born anew to become an instrument of renewal in its heart. Now I felt myself attuned to living harmony with heaven and with all things under heaven each time I flung open my doors in the early morning to breathe the night-cooled air, fragrant with the perfume of flowers! When, as from opening apocalyptic spheres, the sun poured streams of fire over the earth, my heart swelled with awe to the point of breaking, and I whispered: "Now—now—at last the power of devastation sinks into fathomless depths—the miracle approaches! . . ."

Why did you mock me again, O dawn—although you knew that no sun of blessing would rise to shed its glamour

over a day of exaltation; although you knew that he who awakes to enjoy the rose-red happiness of earth awakes also to suffer the pain of earth's humanisation; healed by solitude, he must live sevenfold through the destruction of the masses; and as the war went devastating over wide countries, so will it lay waste land upon land in his soul. And yet you knew, O dawn, that so long as the world hopelessly writhes to escape the grip of death none will even so much as glimpse a renewal of life; each moment of faith, of hope and joy will by itself change into a new restless searching and a new anguish of emptiness. Whoever reaches the purity of solitude becomes a prey of the desert mania of the pure-minded; and he cannot rest until he has seen the sun rise over virgin lands.

Out of gloomy valleys I climbed up towards naked fells, again to seek restlessly a path to the bottom of the blasted depths. Disillusioned, I found that spheres of ecstasy do not open as the sky widens and becomes desolate like the view of an endless mountain range. "On! And on!" I heard these words resounding as a compelling exhortation in my soul, and I left expanse upon expanse between myself and everything living. All that is valuable receded as the river of the valley recedes, to become a distant, invisible murmur in the ears of the wanderer; and all voices rising out of the breast of humanity were changed and fused into a song of the wilderness. He grasps this who has felt thread upon thread cut off, and has seen delusion even in what the wisest proclaim to be eternal; who has experienced nights of anguish in the wilderness, and feared the dawn, although his soul was but one yearning prayer for the dawn to come.

My heart was pure as only the frozen heart is pure when I reached the infinite regions of ice that lie beyond the strife of man and the struggles of nature. Night lay heavily as in the beginning of time on the white undulating plains . . . silent as one who broods over the last secret of fate. The steep, black cliffs which rose on the distant horizon to break the

endless view stood frozen in wrath and rebellion, like the last impotent cry of the earth for redemption from eternal death.

There was a time when the world, locked in ice like these regions, lay waiting in slumber silent as death. Its sleep was heavy, like the sleep of the frozen heart; and if a bird of prey circled in the sky it vanished swiftly, frightened by something it did not understand. There came spring upon spring, but the ice piled up higher and higher; summer followed summer, but summers were powerless against the cold.

O dawn, glorious were the hopes you kindled in the bosom of the earth when at last, at last it felt you coming, after its night of death. Snowdrifts began to drop and melt, blue water glistened between icy brims, and the sun rose ever higher in flaming splendour. Something was moving; there were sounds of booming and crashing as never afterwards in the days of glacial upheaval; warm winds came sighing over wide lakes; water rushed through the valleys, and huge landslides came sweeping down broad mountains. Ploughing their way to the sea, the glaciers piled up their pinnacles with an all-conquering creative power. . . . As I have listened of a summer night to the splashing of the waves in my wood-girt lake, I have often caught the echo of the great things which happened then.

There came a day when the world, born anew out of the struggle of elemental powers, lay biding release from the enchantment which none but man can break. "Now—now—the miracle will happen." Where snakes are breeding, freely filling the swamps with their broods, temple groves will rise and altar smoke will curl up in the blue shades toward the lofty vaults. There is no shore so austere and no wilderness so grim but man will be its master. And the barest mountain, crowned with castles and ornate with flowers, will be a thing of loveliness and beauty.

Why did you mock the world, O dawn, as you always mocked my longing? And yet you knew that men would tear each other to pieces as the beasts tore each other in forests destroyed by the cold and buried under ice. And you knew that they, rent and divided in themselves, would spread hatred and ugliness wherever they went; that they would hunt each searching heart until it fluttered with fear, and drive those eager for life out into the wilderness to perish.

But who can withstand the lure of virginal beauty? When I see you kindled again, mocking dawn, over these lands which no mortal has trodden, and where nothing betrays the defiling hand of man, I forget everything, and I see the spirit of renewal sweep purifying over the world as it swept purifying over my soul. A rosy shimmer spreads over all the waves in the ocean of clouds in which the world of ice lies floating like an uninhabited island in space. Drunk with the purity of the air, I raise my weary body, fired by a newly kindled love of wandering, and inevitably drawn towards the silent, celestial depths. Every steep in the distance becomes a sparkling gem—everything exults, tempts, and promises. . . .

You are cruel like my demon, dawn!—and like the longing which consumes my heart you know no mercy. I know as well as you that the miracle can never come to pass. I know that he who wants life itself instead of the sham life with which the faint-hearted seek to console one another is doomed to stray homeless and be lost in solitude. Could all the hell which welled up out of the cleansed earth abiding human fulfilment vanish again; could it be buried under ice and be dead as my heart; could the spirit of renewal come hovering again with breezes of spring and the bliss of summer, to revive all things purified by death; could the world again wake out of its sleep of infinite possibilities; could—could—— Of what use would it be? At the end of the circuit of millions of years



the world would again be what it is. And wandering as I did this morning I should be mocked as I was always mocked by you, O dawn: behind me empty nothingness, and before me heights which none can attain.

Or perhaps? . . .

## THE HERALDS OF THE SUN

Two men from the South travelling in the Northland in earliest times told on their return of the strange things they had witnessed there. What astonished the listeners most was this: "When summer is over and autumn approaches the sun sinks below the horizon, and is seen no more. Darkness overspreads the face of the earth; and, dreading that the sun will never again return, the people send out heralds to climb the high mountains. The heralds at first do not see the sun any more than the people in the plains. But when at last they return to say that they have seen the sun shining on the summits, all are fired with a fierce joy. In the darkness of the winter night they assemble to celebrate the feast of light. And this feast they call *yule*."

Did you ever try to understand what our ancestors felt when the summer light became a dying memory, and none knew what depths the waxing darkness would reach? Dawn was breaking over the human consciousness. Man could no longer die as do the animals that remember nothing of the day that is gone and have no thought of the day that is to come—but neither could he live. . . . Cries of dread and madness sounded through the forests where the snow and ice were massed. Was everything to be buried anew? Had strange, dark stories of the horror and anguish of glaciation been passed on from father to son? Was it such tales that filled the darkness and cold with nameless fear?

Silent and oppressive darkness brooded over the human masses. What availed their having learned to understand the rising of the sun in summer light and its setting in winter darkness so long as their knowledge failed to explain the mystery of their own rising in life and setting in death? Out

of this root of gnawing wonder grew the wild shoots of hopeless questions; and the short journey on earth is a struggle in morning twilight. Still less than their ancestors in the virgin forests are the men of our day able to live the life of flowers and animals in joy and pain, as naturally and as unconscious of time as they. And the human race is as far to-day as it was at the time of our first ancestors from reaching the equally natural eternal spheres of human fulfilment beyond the present penumbra.

As the centuries passed the heralds of the sun mounted always towards the heights of thought and feeling.

Lonely and burdened with their fate, the heralds moved on and on. Their souls were fired with faith and a secret conviction that the fire within them would herald the presence of the sun. The conflicting desires and confused voices of the swarming multitudes receded and became as an indistinct murmur in their ears—not unlike the murmur from distant falling waters which haunts the traveller in the wilderness as the mists float past him. But no message of renewal for the human multitudes to live and die on reached them in return for what they left behind; loneliness overwhelmed them and drove them back, empty-handed, to the waiting people.

The first of the returning heralds spoke thus: "It is not the sun in itself, it is the being of ineffable goodness manifested in the sun who lends splendour to the flower and makes the bird sing with joy; that being you should love and worship." But his enemies realised that their hour had come, and the people were angered at the weakness of their chieftain. He died, and the sands of the desert buried his temple city.

The face of another who reached the heights became like a frozen mask, smiling icily at human impotence. As he came down again, meeting the anxiously questioning eyes in the forest, he had no other reply to offer than an inexorable "No."

"No, the fire that burns in space is *not* a symbol of life, and has nothing to do with the burning heart of man. Even if the Milky Way were made up of crackling sparks from a hearth of sacrifice, this would not signify that the universe is a living being in whose honour the sacrificial fire has been kindled. The worlds are whirling ashes; men are made of ashes, and even in the depth of their souls there is nothing but a fading memory of incineration. The glamour which you think you see where the fire casts its shimmer and which you call *life* is a tempting vanity, and nothing is worthy of the aureole of holiness. The ice is growing round the human heart."

A third came back, wandering meekly, and the people imagined they saw effulgence on his brow. He spoke of the open heavens, and of his Father, the Lord of Righteousness, passing judgment on the dead and living. "He has seen the sun," thought those who heard him. "Under his auspices the ice will melt, and the human heart will bloom; let us celebrate Christmas in his honour." But the wrath could not be subdued. It grew in the trail of the dreamer. The people turned from him in disappointment. For the heart is never emptier than when the celestial visions which it trusted fade away and come to naught.

When yet another of the race of heralds sought his way down declivities and steeps all the cliffs resounded with his anguish, and like a raving madman he reached the plains: "God is dead. A cry for power was his last sign of life. There is no grace, no mercy. Least of all is there any righteousness. Life is but rattling echoes of the craving for power in empty hearts." War and destruction and dissolution came, and all recognised the truth of the message brought by the raving man.

Have you experienced this? . . . Have you humbly stretched out longing hands towards those who in the course of the

centuries came back from the mountain of transfiguration? Have you longed in vain? And yet not flagged in your hope? Then you may understand what the heralds felt when in the dawn of time they first saw the glow of the rising sun over white infinities. They threw themselves prostrate on the earth. Not knowing why, they covered their faces. Had they not owned a god their god would have been born in that moment, and Sun would have been his name. The gratitude which filled them would have burst their hearts, had it not been allowed to stream out freely towards a being that could receive all as well as give them all.

The heralds went racing down the steeps, down through drifts of snow and mists and whizzing winds. They reached the forests and the ice-bound lakes where darkness lay heavily over all things. And ere long the message swept like a cry of joy from shore to shore, bringing the frozen forth from caves where they had prepared their graves. Fires were kindled on all the hill-tops, that the horrors of the night might recede before the radiant message of the sun's return, before the victory gained over death and the glorious message of renewal.

## FIRE AND ITS CONQUEROR

THERE was a time when fire was a strange and distant thing; it came and was gone, nobody knew whence, nobody knew whither. It flashed forth in the sky, and presently the night was again impenetrable; it passed, devastating, over wooded lands, and killed whatever came in its way—but suddenly everything was cold and charred, and the fire had vanished. Was it a wind which not only blew but also scorched? Was it an animal with poison in its mouth? Those who had seen it believed, but those who had seen nothing scoffed at those who believed. It inspired all, believers and unbelievers, with the dread and the fascination of the inaccessible.

If anyone succeeded in catching a flame and warming himself by its glow some winter night he took great care to watch over the flame lest it should cause destruction or die out too soon. Rumours of this miracle went abroad, and from near and far people came together to see the saint who had power over the god of fire. If they were allowed to borrow some of the fire or embers to take home to their shore, it was to them as though the sun itself had descended to earth, taking pity on their distress; therefore the sign of the sun became also the sign of fire.

Then a man rose and spoke: "It will be possible for you to produce fire, to extinguish it and kindle it anew whenever you list. Through densest darkness it will guide you to any goals to which you may strive. All the strength that is hidden in it will become yours, the power of the lightning as well as that of the volcano. This will not come about through exorcism and prayers, and not as a result of unfathomable grace, but thanks to your cunning and the devoted work of your hands." Woe to that pitiable man, audacious beyond

all limits, who reached for this thing to make it a friend of man and a part of his life! To reach out for what none may touch with his hand! To drag down to earth the holiest thing of all, the sword of the celestial ruler and his devastating chastisement! To seek to curb to the will of man and impress into his service that which most of all revealed man's impotence!

There is a strange, remote something which appears to all of us as the fire appeared to our ancestors in the forest, inaccessible and self-ruling—a deadlier enemy and a more helpful friend than anything else.

As the lightning flashes in the sky, this something flashes out in a few godlike individuals, and there are no legends too exaggerated to testify to its power. As the northern lights flame over icebergs and Arctic seas, so does this flame as an uncertain celestial hope over cold and dead centuries. If a ray of this thing falls into the heart of a searching human being he is born again, and acquires strength to bear the hardships under which he succumbed before; if this ray is extinguished he becomes a victim of restlessness, and is hunted over the earth and on through time in quest of what he has lost. He who has felt his anguish yield to an emotion of the heart, and who has experienced this emotion of the heart as the happiness of the unspeakable, knows what participation in the sacred fire means.

No wonder that the source of the world's origin was sought in this something; that it was baptised and named "the Lord of the Worlds," or, briefly, "the Lord." Wherever anything emerges from the void to tread the path of life, it is invariably this same thing which reveals itself in different forms. When the savage feels the lust of virility setting his blood aflame and instilling a strength which nothing else could instil, he whispers, full of bliss and struck with awe before what happens: "It is God"; and when we ourselves think of the

coming into being and the preservation of the human species for higher purposes we bow our heads, with the same words on our lips. We recognise this something in all things of value. If it does not hover behind the poet's visions his words will be mere words; and if it does not fill ecstasy with its power for eternity, ecstasy will be no more than a passing intoxication. When we rise renewed from the rest of night we are experiencing the regenerative power of this something. It is the same power and nothing else that endows the human mass with strength to sacrifice, and makes the individual forget himself when a people is born in great moments of common endeavour.

As in the beginning of time fire had power equally to destroy and to create, so even to this day this something is both destructive and creative. If it fails to find the roads of renewal it turns into a disease that devastates the soul. It imparts to evil the strength to do what evil is unable to do by itself. Responsibility for crimes which none would dare assume the Lord's Anointed take easily and playfully upon their shoulders. Behind the murder of human races visions of heaven shine as an inspiring force. Without the words "God" or "Vocation" or "the Victory of Justice," nations could not be roused against one another. He who looks for the first cause of the World War without taking this something into account will fumble in empty air: it was this that swept ravaging like fire over all men's souls and through the masses, leaving behind it a world in ashes.

. . . . .

What simplicity to believe and what audacity to preach thus: "As you have conquered fire, so you will conquer the warming, creative, renewing elements in life. All power hidden in these will be your power. The workings of grace in the unconscious depths will be revealed to you, and as conflicts vanish from the mind of the poet in his moments of divine grace, so conflicts will vanish from the human masses when God's grace visits them."



## THE BARE SIMPLICITY OF TRUTH

IN all times men have striven to establish connection with that "something" beyond all things, the highest and the last; that which inspired their sense of an origin outside all that is perishable, and their hope of a future in freedom and peace. The defiant sought to compel it to serve them; the humble sought to reach it in submissive quiet. But whether defiant or submissive, they were never willing in their endeavour to accept reality. They were not concerned with being and becoming in the struggle between death and renewal, but only with being and becoming as a source from which to drink freely, so as to evade the struggle that leads along stony paths to the heights of life. Men were willing to breathe the air in the ecstatic spheres of freedom, but they were not willing to undergo the ecstatic's suffering through disintegration and mechanisation in the agony of death; they wanted to share "*God's omnipotence*" in rapture and in visions of heaven, but they did not want to accept their share of "*God's impotence*" in sacrifice and devotion.

Death and life pre-suppose each other. He who has not lived cannot die. But he who never died, who never suffered the pangs of disintegration and mechanisation, he cannot live. He possesses no individual things, that have part in his nature, to manifest that which is; he has no avenues for that which becomes; no possibilities of renewal, no driving necessities, no lines of conduct, no fate. His life is an empty and soulless nonentity—whether he calls this nonentity suffering or happiness, whether it consists of the darkness of the doomed or of the luminous spheres of singing angels. This is the truth in its bare simplicity: what is true of ourselves, of every man, of every point where we meet life in one of its myriad forms, is true also of the living mass in its entirety,

of what the learned call the "universe" and the unlearned call "God."

God is neither dead nor living. God is the rhythm of death and renewal in its beginning, its end, and its every least inflection.

We raise our eyes towards heaven, and the farther we penetrate into its lofty space by means of instruments and calculations, the more does it fall asunder into the circling specks of dust that are suns and planets. We explore all things the earth has to offer, including the soul of man, and discover constantly new units in what seemed uncompounded; there are no bounds to disintegration, and there is no single point where the elements are proof against the unchangeableness of mechanical laws. The scientist who has his eyes steadily fixed on this *aspect of death in the universe* is bound to fall a victim to the illusion which gave rise to the word "world-mechanism."

But the man who feels, and who longs and thirsts for redemption, and, appalled by the awe of death, keeps his eyes steadily fixed on the *aspect of life in the universe*, is bound with equal certainty to fall a victim to the illusion which created the word "God." He must have a refuge; he cannot endure the burden of life unless he may aspire to something that is unaffected by death—that is never hampered by individual things or their laws, and, beyond all vicissitudes, shines in unchangeable perfection of life. His heart dies if he may not sing his "Holy, holy, holy is the Lord God Almighty." He has no use for a god who is not able to do all things.

It was not those who cried out in agony "God is dead" who killed God; they only consolidated the murder which God's nature had sustained at the hands of those who had blinded themselves as well as the masses to the simple truth that that which cannot die is dead already.

The beginning and the end of all healing resides in the injunction: "Do not thwart the workings of the power for healing immanent in all that lives." Those who preached world mechanism did not check the warming and delivering forces ever striving to make man free and the earth a home in the same degree as those who preached God's impotence. The former made God a stone; but the latter made him something more destitute of life and spirit than the hardest and most inanimate of things.

Not until we relinquish these two illusions and face the truth in its bare simplicity do we attain, in giving and taking, that living relationship with the highest and the last for which our thoughts and our hearts are yearning. The disintegration and mechanisation into given forms which meets us in the Universe is the same disintegration and mechanisation which we experience in our fateful moments, only in proportions so overwhelming that no eye can compass them. We are struck dumb before the majesty of death, and we see that even our most fatal breakdown is but a swiftly fading reflection of God's struggle in that which is and that which becomes.

At the same time we perceive that life has not been lost, that it rises radiant from fathomless depths of death, that it is renewed in every being who is born and grows, and wells with the force of redemption out of inexhaustible sources in every human being who, fighting the battle of the spirit, achieves healing for his own good and for the good of the generations and their times. When we see life's miracle against this background of death we are lifted to vertiginous heights. And our hearts are filled with boundless gratitude for having ourselves a share in this invincibility of life, and being symbols in a form indispensable to perfection.

## THE LAW OF GRAVITY AND THE GOSPEL OF ELEVATION

You speak of "inanimate things" and look down upon them from your heights of life. You pity those who worshipped the sun as a living being, and when I mention "the will in things" you shrug your shoulders scornfully, saying, "a poor figure of speech." You call things dead because the communion between them has been lost through disintegration and mechanisation, and has been changed into gravitation, attraction, and chemical affinity. You are right in so far as life no longer deserves to be called life in the absence of creative communion that grows and develops and warms the heart, imparting renewal to all it reaches.

With what right do you exalt yourself? Do you not see how ridiculous you are in your arrogance? Did you yourself never feel communion change into *dead desire*, and degenerate still further into mere attraction and repulsion of bodies? When your heart no longer lent tenderness to the caress of your hand and to your glances you wanted to flee from your beloved—far, far away—anything but that! How could you violate the fairest flower of life's happiness! How could you plunge your beloved into the dead sea of sensuality when she longed more than ever to be carried over the song-encircled water of sensuality to shores of faery beauty! You wished to flee, but you could not flee. An overpowering force drew you back, and that which might have raised you to freedom hurled you down into anguish. Why—why? No matter how you called out your "Why?" you received no answer but this: "For the same reason as the falling stone is attracted to the earth." You reject this answer, saying: "No, no—that is not so." But the tremor in your voice betrays that you are unwilling to admit that you remember the rustling of death's wings in your presence.

Have you also forgotten those days when everything that lived and stirred, because of the ties of the blood, sank to the bottom and became a dead force of kinship? Before this change came you had received your share of the victories and conquests of preceding generations in the shape of dispositions and aptitudes. They were passed on to you irrespective of your merit, not as gifts from above, but as treasures from the depths beneath you, and your heart thrilled with gratitude because you were born to earth not as a son of heaven, but as the bearer of an earthly inheritance. But something happened: as when the ice breaks up at spring there boomed and crashed an upheaval through the mass of inherited things, until it fell asunder in conflicting contrasts. You wanted to be free, you wanted to become yourself; but the more you strained your will, the more inexorably you were driven where you least of all wanted to go. You were made to feel the unavoidable power of heredity and the impotence of man before the forces of nature, and you rose in defiance and hardness against those who gave you life and made you helpless. But why did your arm wither when you raised it to cut the bonds, and why were you constantly driven back within their range? Why? For the same reason that atoms are drawn to atoms—you, an atom among atoms.

Perhaps you never even caught an echo of the transformation of the living mass into a dead mass in your relation to your country and your people. You do not know what it means to be drawn like a speck without will to places that saw the birth of your happiness, and where the first storms swept over your soul; to be drawn in despite of every "why? What have I to do with this country, where nothing can stop me from sinking? What have I to do with things and people as dead as myself?" You do not know either what it means to despise beyond all measure the circling of the masses, and to resist it with all your might—and yet to be sucked down into them—not as a voice crying for communion in the wilderness, and as a witness of

renewal, but only to add your own weight to that of the masses, and thereby to make them circle more slowly, in accordance with the law of gravity.

You consider yourself happy in your impassivity. Indeed, it saves you from being moved by what is more painful than anything else. The world's sorrow and the world's anguish remain alien to you; or perhaps you don them like a cloak, so as not to seem old-fashioned when you take up your pose? Because of your insensibility to inner death you cannot respond to death in its great majestic forms. The mechanisation of the universe remains for you an external fact which you explore by means of your reason and utilise for practical purposes; never an inner fact which makes you quiver with despair each time you hear your heart's warmest prayers resounding over dead lands, and which you feel like a stranglehold on your throat each time you try to storm the heavens to attain freedom—and are forced to return—to go on circling in the tracks you despise.

But he who never knew communion with *universal death*, and never had a share in it, will never experience *universal life* and become one with it. Only in following the roads of death do we reach the points where space opens above us and life flows down freely into the depths of the soul. To him who never advanced so far God will for ever remain a phrase which from the lips seeks its way to the heart; or a mere feeling as vague, erratic, and surprising as other feelings, as incomprehensible and elusive to our thought as they; but never a fact of life, as certain and solid as death—and as accessible to the will to consciousness as all the phenomena of death in the universe which we meet, weigh, and explore in different directions.

You, fortunate unmoved one! You are the poorest of all creatures; you are unmoved by your own poverty—you have not even the means to discover it. When you see how the

butterfly has formed itself after the flower, and the flower after the butterfly, you are not aware of the import of this symbol of communion. When nature comes flooding over you to fill you with the immeasurable happiness of the community of life you reduce this miracle to a sentiment, calling the sentiment a mood, and letting the mood pass by you like a gust of wind.

And when you hear the bustle of the city mingle with the murmur of the wind, it suggests to you nothing but a certain mood. You do not perceive in it the same searching spirit of communion that clothes the shore and breaks forth among woods and hills, hoping to find embodiment here in more perfect symbolical forms than it attained in nature, and reaches the goal of its searching whenever a man feels: "Not for life, but for eternity." For you there exist only plans, systems, organisations, politics; but not the inspiring impulse behind these things; you are not even aware of it when it endeavours, through bloody war and all sorts of catastrophes that weld men together, to reach the goal which it cannot reach by gentler methods because of your narrow-mindedness and that of those like you.

Truly, your ancestors who conceived of the sun as a living being were nearer to God than you are.

## THE POWER OF EFFLUENCE

WE must not measure love with a tape-measure, nor human beings by standards that have nothing to do with their innermost nature. If we estimate a creative thinker according to his ability to prepare a meal he remains to our eyes a good-for-nothing and a stranger. We shall never share in his work of liberation, as only those who understand can share in it. And it is not his fault, but our own, if he fails to succour us in our distress; we ourselves barred the way with our narrowness. . . . The same thing is true of our relation to God.

The simple citizen, who never leaves the level of daily drudgery where the *will* must ever be on the alert as a spur from one external action to another, is unable to understand a type in which human nature is realised on a higher plane, and which in its relations to the world is governed not by the will as highest directive but by the *power of individual effluence*. He does not grasp the meaning of being wrapped up in oneself, of indifference to external aims, of the concentration of energy on things which seem to have nothing to do with the world's progress; for him, to maintain that all great things achieved have been achieved through the agency of this power, and not through the exertion of a vigorous and active will, is folly. He does not even listen if you tell him that this higher directive power compares with the will as the poet's inspiration compares with a fragment of conversation on commonplace things. Individual effluence is independent of human valuations; it is inspiration; it is human participation in a form of life that has the overpowering dimensions of the universe.

When we seek to grasp firmly with our powers of reason the essence of this union and communion beyond all things,



which reveals itself in the dead attraction of dead bodies and in the living attraction of living bodies for one another, the greatest difficulty facing us is this: we are unable to withstand the impulse to connect the concept "will" with the concept "life." A life that pervades all nature and is so far above our own selves must needs involve an almighty will subject to no laws but its own. We are unable to penetrate the truth that action, in proportion as it grows beyond the narrow limits of everyday life, ceases to be an expression of the will and becomes the expression of effluence; and this is especially true of life in its highest potency—of universal life.

Yet this fact is so obvious that it ought to be clear to everyone. We meet it constantly, daily, in all things. As we experience the world as a state and an act of communion, so do we experience it as a form of resistance which interferes with the working out of our lives, compels us to exhaust our forces in useless struggles, and tries to imprison us till we perish of self-suffocation. As a form of resistance, and at the same time as an outpouring of forces, we know neither whence nor why. Who can understand the fact of our regeneration through nightly sleep? Who can penetrate the miracle that occurs when nourishment renews our physical buoyancy and gives wings to our spirit? Who has ever followed to their depths those sources by virtue of which suffering humanity can advance in its task instead of succumbing to nature's resistance? What is this dead resistance but the death aspect of the workings of an effluence? And what is this flowing of forces but the life-aspect of the same effluence?

The higher the life-wave rises in our souls, and the more we feel it to be our paramount duty and our last necessity to be ourselves and to show the world what we are, the more we feel the whole world as a mass of inert resistance. To every individual with the prophet's craving for truth there comes a moment when he sees his vocation, and when he is conscious of all other people, even his nearest friends, as

a resistance, and society, with all that has been, as an insurmountable wall. Worse even: at this moment everything existing within him rises according to the laws of nature and heredity to bar the way to the heights of elucidation. But whoever has passed through some fateful crisis of growth knows that the currents from the depths are never stronger and richer than just then. Whence came the strength which in all times gave the prophet power to defy resistance, and keep his eyes fixed on the heavens from which light poured down into his soul? Whence came the miracle which converted a groping quest into a definite and powerful asset to human life?

This is the truth: our communion with God is our sharing in the universal power of effluence, not only in its living, but also in its dead manifestations. Our freedom is the acceptance not only of the vivifying currents of the depths but also of their dead resistance. Or did anyone ever mature and become himself without struggling against the world's resistance? No heart ever waxes strong in devotion and exalted flight unless it has writhed in despair over the inert heart of man. As always, so here, we live not only in spite of death but also because of it.

Also because of death. . . .

It has occurred to me when I have loved, and needed the one I loved more than ever, that I have said: "Leave me alone." I have been surprised at my own request, unable to understand it. When, however, being alone, the turmoil and immaterial trifles of daily life that separated us dropped away, and I saw the beloved stand out in the inspiring light of our first love, I began to understand. I understood fully only when I had been left alone for ever, and no words, no actions, nothing on earth could ever interfere with the effluence of the beloved. When it reached me with the fullness of eternity I realised

that I had desired the distance, the solitude, so as to experience in a measure what only death could give me wholly.

If I felt the presence of God, and if He should interfere in my life as the father interferes in the life of the son, I would say: "Leave me alone." I want to know the highest as an emanation of the unknown essence, not knowing whence it comes nor what it will work, only feeling the security which the unknown, unreachable power that promotes life can give me. But I need not pray. God's nature is effluence.

Our trust in God is not only the trust in the unchangeable laws of nature which inspires the builder when he lays the corner-stone in the soil beyond the reach of frost; it is also the trust which the heart feels when love acquires such strength as to make eternity vibrate with life.

## THE FACT OF SYMBOLISATION

A STRANGE contradiction this! We know that all that is most beautiful, strongest, and most essential in our life, all poetry and art, all the conquests of thought, all transformation of the human masses into nations, has been produced not by reasoned calculation but by a spontaneous act of creation from which everything called calculation is absent: we know that the formation of symbols is the end and object to which all creative human processes tend. But when we consider the creative forces at work in the life-mass to prevent its becoming a chaotically disintegrated and indissolubly petrified death-mass, then we assume that these forces are working according to the laws of reason. We ascribe reason to God; we call Him "universal reason." And when we are confronted with the glaring unreason of the world-process we sigh: "The ways of the Lord are inscrutable."

Man is sprung from the concurrence of elements of the most varying kinds. We know some of them. We call them heredity, heaven and earth, the animal series and karma, and so on indefinitely. If we approach this aggregate of causes with the divining-rod of reason, the rod does not stir. No matter how long we search, we never achieve any perspective and meaning. Why? Because we have in mind that linking-up of cause and effect which characterises reason's array of things in logical succession. The farther we delve below the surface here, the more all sources of origin divide and branch off—just as the roots of a plant spread out in all directions in the soil. If, however, we approach the coming into being of man with dream-formation in mind, the matter assumes quite a different aspect.

The dream is the result of a co-operation of bodily sensations

of pleasure and pain, of many years' experiences of the most varying nature, of influences which we can only dimly perceive, and of shadows which we are powerless to penetrate—the dream-figure being the result of the unifying effort of this mass, the stem in which all roots unite, and which makes the plant a plant. The law of logic has been replaced by a system of a higher order. The system of human evaluation no longer obtains, but only the system inherent in the substance of life—the system of symbol-formation. Every human being is a manifestation, sprung from the substance of life, of that system.

Symbol-formation in human form has its death-form: the fixation implied in the formation of self and all it entails: the type, the social function, the achievement of the age—up to and including the eternalised symbol embodied in bronze. But it has also its life-form, which is manifested in all that moves in streams, and whose force of renewal not even bronze can fetter.

As with man, so with the world of which he is part. The more science brings the facts that determine its existence into the light of day, the more these are found to diverge; and so far all efforts of thinkers to achieve unification by thought have only served to show the futility of thought.

As the attraction of things to each other by their gravity is the death-form of union, so all that has been disintegrated into a diversity of things, and mechanised into the unchangeable paths of the force, is the death-form of symbol-formation. And as the living attraction to one another of living beings is the life-form of union, so all that heals and delivers and beautifies, all that inspires us with faith in the good, and that enriches life, is the life-form of symbol-formation.

We understand this when someone we have loved and who has been the symbol that comprises all values passes away.

All that has grown out of the common life dies away with her into unchangeableness. But at the same time the form thus created is filled to the brim with the warming flux of values.

I had to reach out for a hold above the diversity of life. I could not live without living in unity and accord. I reached out for all things; I strained myself to embrace all things. I was like a man who tries to clutch the entire earth with the power of his representation. I broke down in impotence. And I suffered agony. Then the fact of symbol-formation confronted me, and I saw every individual thing invested with the life of all. There came peace to my soul. And everything became dear to me, every stone, every plant, every sight—even every human being.

To move the fact of symbol-formation to the fore, substituting the symbolical order of the world for the reasoned order, is no mere matter of valuation and longing for love; he who does this has attained the wisdom of humble reception. And when he receives that which is, the wonder comes to pass—reason is satisfied as never before.

## THE POWER OF REDEMPTION

THE scientist demonstrates the omnipotence of law-bound forces, and the ordained stretches his hands towards heaven, crying: "Lord God Almighty." For both of them the world would collapse should a doubt arise as to the omnipotence of what they worship. What is the law without the power to enforce it, and what is life without the power to shape itself despite all laws? But we, lonely seekers outside the realm of established values, we rise to contend against both, with the defiance evoked by narrowness and with the implacability that fills us when we see truth struck to the heart.

As we are lifted to a higher, purer atmosphere when we escape the exciting, burning, changeable spheres of feeling and achieve communion, so likewise when we emancipate ourselves from compulsion and attain to power. And as union and communion die away to become attraction, and revive when those that belong together redeem each other mutually, so power dies away to become the *necessity* with which men and things follow predestined paths—to revive in the *happiness of the power to redeem*. Without necessity there is no expansion of life; without the happiness of redeeming power life has no value.

This is what makes us revolt against the world of the learned as well as against that of the strong in faith: they are both equally dead, and can never offer us the right home for our vital longing. Owing to *mechanisation* the law-bound world has lost more and more the power of humanisation, and lost also that criterion of life which is plasticity; and this world, where everything may be done through the "immediate interference of the Lord," is but an unreal world in process of *dissolution*. And this is the basic cause of the death of both: the incapacity of the narrow-minded to understand the nature

of omnipotence. Without omnipotence no universal life; without a universal life, transfusing all individual things and manifestations, nothing worth seeking and nothing worth possessing can exist.

He who having journeyed for years through the valley of death meets one who possesses not only the eye that compels but also the soul that redeems, and who at the awakening of love has known all valueless things to change and acquire value—he knows the significance of this. The great miracle of love lies precisely in its omnipotence; not in the sense that love, like a strong will, violently and irresistibly breaks down all obstacles that bar the way, but in the sense that love releases the well-springs so completely that everything, everything, shares in the victory over death. There are hours when the happiness of feeling a warm, liberating current transfuse everything that is frozen and glaciated becomes so great and wonderful that we cannot help thinking: Had I been made to experience a still greater impotence, and had I been hurled still deeper into the spheres of death, I should now have been lifted to still higher spheres of life. For as suffering reaches its climax at the moment of birth, so does our exultation rise highest at the moment when the power of redemption triumphs in its effort of renewal; then we feel that something happens “in God.”

The poet does not attain his visions by brooding and self-satisfied wisdom, and he who has redeeming power does not derive it from himself, but receives it through inspiration. He knows this who has felt power come over him like a thunder-clap out of heavy clouds, or like light out of fathomless skies; who has felt power emanate from him to all he touched, assume form in all he fashioned, and, through effluence, spread in ever-widening circles to infinity—to “God.” He knows also that no one reaches this height of omnipotence unless he has accepted the world in its profoundest death, and has experienced God’s impotence in the depth of his own heart.



## GOD'S FREEDOM AND GOD'S PERSONALITY

A CHILD asks: "Can God do *anything*?" "Certainly." "But then God can die." That child apprehended the truth: If God had not been able to die, if impelled by an irresistible longing for life He had been unable to bring the sacrifice of death to completion, then we could not live. For if life had not settled into unchangeable paths, there would be no road of life-expansion for mortal men. God's freedom does not lie in His freedom from death, but in the superabundance of His bounty through death; for what is death but the shell in which He ever and again offers us the reviving drink of life, that through it we may become free—as He is free?

He who achieves the demand of holiness that reads: "You shall not build your life on escape from death; you shall build it on renewal through death"—he achieves it in virtue of his participation in God's freedom.

Out of the qualm of our lives as citizens we grow up to a free personal life, when the strife of daily life no longer affects our soul, and when, being thus unaffected, we have a comforting and elucidating word to bestow upon every striving man; when, being unified, we become a stronghold in which even those most alien to us may find repose and gather strength; when through the emanation of our own being we cause life to be born anew in ever-widening circles, helping generations still unborn to find themselves and their path; when we acquire a greater redeeming power than the wisest of worldly rulers can ever attain by world-supremacy; for this growth of personality occurs by reason of God's personality in the same manner as the growth from childhood to manhood occurs by reason of the laws of growth.

You ask: "Is there a personal God?" I answer: "Every *personal* human being is a living answer to your question."

## THE ROCK

I WAS talking to a friend about "God." He interrupted me, exclaiming: "Wherever you go a devastating fire of thought sweeps over the hazy land of dreams and hopes where 'God' abides. With the sword of distinction you would cut off everything that does not bear the seal of certitude; and to you nothing is certain but that which the ruthless scrutiniser has established as a fact, at the same time internal and external. As Paradise vanished when science brought to light the existence of the cave-man, so does 'The Almighty' vanish, and 'World-Reason' and 'Truth.'

"The wilderness is there for the great to fast in, and to reach the perfection of spiritual grandeur; but to the majority it means only an agonising death. Where will they find shelter in the cold of life, and what will help them in their nights of lonely anguish? You are more cruel than those who lighted the martyr's pyres! They put the innocent to death in the name of their faith and their Master; you murder in the name of certainty and purity what is of more importance than all the individual children of men; you kill the touching simplicity which only uncertainty fosters, and the tender contrition of the heart which only those impure and burdened with guilt can feel; you murder the tremulous note in the depths which inspired the creation of the best and the most beautiful things we know."

I replied: "My friend, if you love somebody, is it not the definite knowledge of his nature and the assurance of his presence that give your love wings to rise high in a redeeming song to gladden him? Have you not noticed what a paralysing poison uncertainty is, and how insecurity makes the heart void? The same is true of God.

"It is not true that the song comes from the darkness and the jubilation from shame—both stand for the rising of eternity out of the mystery which is the opposite and the background of clearness and certainty, and which grows fuller and becomes more fraught with beauty the stronger the radiance of clearness and certainty. As long as the belief in the mystery of redemption in virtue of the mercy of the Father was a greater fact than all the tangible things of the world, it made men's souls vibrate; but when this belief died it became the prison-house of the jubilant heart.

"It is true that he who shows men ways of thought and science by which to reach the last and highest must sweep like a devastating desert fire over things of greater value than the things which others have destroyed. A discovery may reduce the significance of the disputes of a century to that of a historical incident, and the solution of a mathematical problem may show every theory of the world-system to be a misconstruction of our fantasy. The tracing of the laws of death and renewal in the mass of the universe will make every word uttered about God a worthless, empty phrase. As the augurs once ceased to read the people's fate in the entrails of animals offered in sacrifice, so will the clergy cease to preach the redemption of the world through the Son of God. As the columns on the seashore were once abandoned to the destructive forces of time so will the shrines of the saints stand deserted and become owls' nests. And all customs, laws, duties, objects of devotion, all spiritual values, all striving for secular and divine ends relating to the old god-symbols will perish at the same time. Men had remained stuck fast in their narrow belief that the last and highest is inaccessible to exploring thought, just because no one was willing to assume the responsibility for the sacrificial office of elucidation.

"Yet I say to you, my friend: This will work no harm. When the core is dead, the shell may burst. The usurper on the throne of the spirit will vanish as rapidly as a dethroned

emperor vanishes from the thoughts of all. If some memory of the altar-service before the cross of the old idol should sometimes rise again in an inquiring mind, it will cause but a sigh of relief that the past is past, that at last that has happened which was bound to happen.

“For as a way leading to the great communion it *had* to happen. . . .

“Could any agreement have been reached in regard to the sun’s nature until all personal valuations had been sacrificed on the altar of science and humanity had acquired the means of attaining a common goal along common ways? Agreement in regard to the last and the highest will be equally impossible until all the visions of the saints and the fantasies of the prophets have been burned to ashes in the testing fire of science. But the knowledge that is to lead to an unshakable belief must be based on congruity between the inner experience and its external manifestation. This congruity, this unanimous acceptance of a self-evident faith, is the rock on which the re-creation of the earth into a human home must be based. Every other foundation is built on a volcanic soil.

“The great and the strong always thought and felt the same. Behind their varying symbols hovers the same revelation of life. Though the whole earth, and though a period of a thousand years lay between them, their work tended in one direction. They had reached the rock which all *must reach*; they had achieved that fastening of the anchor-fluke in the core of the life-mass which all *would have achieved* long since had they not gone adrift and stranded on illusions. As the same laws rule everywhere, so the same grace; and as that which is bound by law is accessible to him who finds the way thither so is that which overflows with grace. As certainly as all are regenerated by nightly sleep, without any merit of their own, so will all be united in one and the same regeneration through grace, when beyond the rivulets of the accidental

they reach one and the same well-spring of grace in the depth of the life-mass. Duty will drive all separate individuals inspired by the same superhuman fact into the same paths, with the same necessity as that by which gravity sucks all rivers down to the same sea. And with the same devotion all human offshoots of life will accept the same universal transformation.

“You fear that the loneliness of the lonely will overwhelm them when they are no longer able to unite in dirges and laments around dusty images of divinity. Can you not see that this is the only way to overcome loneliness? As the scientists by devoted labour have come to speak the same language of thought and observation, so will all hearts, on this highway of devotion, reach each other in that stillness where words are superfluous. Do you not think that this will uplift them infinitely higher than did the Lord Sabaoth and the wailings of the crucified? When the thirst for knowledge broke down the barriers which criminal narrowness had built around it, humanity’s capacity for understanding and penetration of thought reached heights none had anticipated. Why should not its capacity for union with the highest and the last, the thirst of its heart for healing and elevation, likewise reach vertiginous heights when the walls of the old crypts crumble? You may be certain that the new spheres will be filled with mighty rhythms, and all that now strikes emptily upon our ears will tremble with renewed tenderness.

“The rock will be decked with wonderful forests, and the flowers of the heart which adorn their paths will fill us with the felicity to be felt only in the glory of paradise.”

## TIME, SPACE, AND TIMELESS SPHERES

THE higher we rise in ecstatic rapture, the more time ceases to act as a measure of that which happens. In our great moments we do not ask: "How long?" An hour becomes an eternity, and an eternity becomes an hour. The fact that nevertheless it has been granted to us to live fully is so great, so wonderful, that everything, even time, becomes nothing compared to this. But withal we know mechanically, through the exercise of our memory and from our observations of the alternation of light and darkness, how long our happiness has lasted. We live as on two different planes, at once in eternity and in time. It is this that is of importance: that we should live not *either* in eternity *or* in time, but *both* in eternity *and* in time. In this "both-and" lies our profoundest happiness. And in the same "both-and" lies the essence of life. For this we should strive.

We may understand this better if we think of the state of ecstasy in which our dreams are shaped. When after the day's work we fall asleep, time and space cease to be the natural moulds in which everything we experience in the waking state is invariably cast. Dreams bear witness to the dissolution of time and space; the deeper the sleep out of which our dream rises, the more different is the way in which it has been formed from the ways in which our conscious visions and thoughts are fashioned. During sleep we not only witness in a few brief seconds events that would require years for their actual happening, but in one single fragment of a picture that flits before our eyes for a fraction of a second our whole life may lie compressed; thanks to the that oneness in allness which is the dream-symbol, we may in this way live the whole past over again. The renewal which takes place in us during sleep, and which is the most important condition of our subsistence on earth, is enacted in timeless spheres.

The question arises: How is it that after our great hours in communion with eternity and on waking up from sleep we glide into a consciousness of space and time which, irrespective of our will and our actions, remains the same throughout the day, and recurs regularly, day after day, from the cradle to the grave? Why is not our daily consciousness as changeable and indefinite in regard to space and time as that of the night? Why do we not always upon waking experience a renewal of life that affects even time and space, and makes us rise to a world changed in its outward form as well as in its inner value? What is the cause of this still more astounding fact, that the forms of time and space defy all disparities between individuals, and not only remain the same for all peoples and races, but continue unchanged century after century? What is that miraculous grace which makes them subsist as mighty walls around a home in which one generation succeeds another, and thanks to which humanity is able to perform its common task?

The reply will be: Time and space are not of eternity, nor are they products of human discretion. Like every redeeming creation, and like every renewing dream-figure, they are products of that being and becoming in terms of union and symbol-formation that seeks to reach us with its redeeming power, and in whose effluence our own being finds sustenance.

But, like everything else, these symbolical reflexes of the all-life in the life-mass of humanity are subject to death. They have become fixed, and in becoming fixed have become vessels to receive the currents of timeless space. When in our greatest moments we are filled to the brim with these currents we forget the vessel. But when life dries up in the misery of daily life, the vessel becomes everything; we confuse the world given in terms of space and time with reality itself.

Society is held together by the symbol of community.

Centuries have built their lives on it. Individuals and new generations move into this symbol, moulding their active life to its shape and drawing on its life for their values. And this happens as naturally as if the symbol were eternal. And how many are there not who believe in its eternal value? In the same manner every human life that comes to the earth moves into the mass-symbol of time and space. On it different peoples and races have built together, in ages anterior to all that bear witness of human activity. They have built, not in virtue of their own valuations and calculations, but through their connection with the life-mass and in virtue of its forces.

Suppose the mass of life should be disrupted as the lunatic is disrupted when the normal connection between himself and the world, as well as the inner connection between his thoughts, feelings, and actions is severed; suppose there is no longer any communion in it. That fulfilment of communion, that change of allness into oneness which the process of symbolisation represents, could no longer take place in ordinary forms, but only as it is realised in the lunatic, in whom symbols are formed which are unintelligible to anybody else and merely show that the unfortunate one is hopelessly shut up within himself. Suppose that even the power of effluence should vanish from the universe as it vanishes in the sick when emotion can no longer be immediately effective in the life of action, and everything evaporates ineffectually as soon as it arises. In that case all power of redemption also would disappear, and there would be no escape from those meaningless and incoherent mechanical paths in which all things have come to move, any more than when the soul is extinguished.

Between people who do not know each other's language, and who cannot make themselves understood by common means of representation, there cannot be formed a social symbol to reconcile all contrasts. And it is equally impossible then that a common symbol of the range of time and space should be conceived. If one person should condense his



impression of the world into some symbol, this would not unite him with the others; it would, instead, become a wall separating him from them. Time and space would cease to exist. All things would evaporate in those timeless spheres from which the dream comes to the sleeper.

## THE ETERNAL CIRCUIT

THE reflective man knows how the dead masses of thought keep circling around one and the same problem. The things we require for the sustenance of life come from the earth and the air, pass through our body, and, having completed their course, return to the earth and the air. And yonder, in space, huge, ponderous masses move in a steady procession. The ultimate result of mechanisation is an eternal, unchangeable circling. Everything that takes place within time and space takes place within the orbit of this circuit.

When, at the death of the body, we are hurled into timeless space, must we then pass through changes that no eye can survey, to return again to a form we have passed already—in the same manner as the planet flung into space, after a certain period has elapsed, finds itself in a position which it occupied once before?

If time and space were human inventions they would have nothing to tell us of life as such. But they have sprung from being as a product of symbol-formation, and have been imposed upon mankind to be shaped by common creation. And like all expressions of the fact of symbol-formation, they are witnesses of truth. They bear witness, saying: "Verily, the eternal circuit includes yourself."

This testimony confronts us with the most appalling of all thoughts: "Is my place given once for all in the circuit of things as the stone's place in the wall is given, and the crystal's in the stone? Is God, in His dead impotence, but a name for the circling movement, and is He as powerless as myself to release me?"

But mechanisation, as well as the eternal circuit which is a part of it, is only one aspect of life. In its circuit the planet carries life; and this life is never the same, never unchangeable. When the planet reaches a point through which it has passed before its substance is other than it has ever been before; whether richer or poorer depends on the actions of the life-mass—if it has spent itself in war or progressed in common endeavour. You have not only your given place, like the stone; you have also your place as a creative link in the life-mass.

When I think of walking a road I have walked a thousand times before, I am seized with the disgust of repetition. And yet I know from a thousand previous experiences that the road is never the same; the hues vary, the mood varies, everything varies according to my varying capacity of giving and taking as I walk. This change in the message and import of things is unlimited. And its susceptibility of being deepened and intensified is also unlimited.

Eternal death is eternal recurrence. Eternal life is eternal intensification of import.

## GUILT AND GRACE

THEY talk about guilt. Is it man's fault that he must die? He has through no fault of his own been drawn into a circuit with bodily death as a point difficult to pass, to serve purposes far beyond his own reach. When, having yielded to the urge of the forces of reproduction, he laments: "The weight of my sin is heavy upon me," is not his revolt against distant purposes a greater sin than his fall?

Guilt? What living being could be more burdened with guilt than the magical god, if he existed? All crimes dwindle into nothing compared with his crime against humanity. The faithful have praised his fatherly mercy, and yet he has whirled them into an inextricable tangle of aspirations for heaven and savage instincts, has crowded men together without being able to unify their mass into a living body . . . and yet he sent them war. . . .

"Even war is grace," say the believing: "a grace of chastisement to make us repent and improve."

If at least their repentance had made them repent of their belief!

For the war was the drain of death from the ages, the great testimony of God's impotence.

When war invades our souls so that nothing is left untouched by its disgrace; when war leaves reason no peace until it has plumbed the depth from which it springs, and disclosed every skull at the banquet of mankind; when, from its thousands and thousands of roots, it grows up into a symbol of horror, and of all the evil and all the savagery that still defies the process of humanisation; when it opens our eyes and makes us see, as

only symbolical truth can make us see—then grace is at work; much as when the individual is roused by anguished dreams to insight of his weakness, and to realisation of the fact that he is on the road of death.

Like a dream-figure of eternity, like an appalling cry of distress escaping from the god struggling against the death inherent in his own nature, the broken cross stands on the ruins of the temple. There is grace not in the exercise of violence *per se*, but in the ensuing mental process by which this symbol is enlisted in the service of humanisation. Not in destruction, but in renewal. Not in that which lacks significance and meaning, but in the miracle that gives meaning. Not in war as an "action without effect," but in the trans-terrestrial flow of inspiration through which war is changed into an "effect without action" that extends over centuries, with power to redeem and to save.

For grace stands for our reconstruction and our renewal without any merit of ours; it stands for the creation by import of that which is beyond us and above us. The night that gives us strength for the performance of the day is grace; and the journey through life that gives us power over death is grace in a still fuller measure.

If God did not have a share in guilt, He would have no share in grace. To cast one's atonement out into the invisible is to throw it in as a help and hope of victory for the sin-burdened god who in his quest of grace struggles in the agony of death. How could God overflow with grace towards the salvation of mankind without the help of man?

None escapes contrition. The weak man, who has a keener sense of guilt than of grace, is overwhelmed by his burden of sin. The strong man, who has a keener sense of grace than of guilt, is overwhelmed by the dead resistance on his way to the heaven of grace.

Yet contrition brings not suffering only, but also deliverance. When is the weak man happier than in the moment when, prostrate under his own guilt, he partakes of the mercy of the all-forgiving? And when the strong man is crushed utterly, then the last resistance also is crushed, and he attains in trembling exultation that certainty of the victory of life, beyond all measure, which can be attained in no other way. Only in his moments of breakdown does the immortal speak his strongest words to the mortal.

To sin is to be an obstacle to grace, and to add increased mechanical force to the circuit, instead of adding depth to its meaning; to harden our hearts in the presence of the beloved, and to hush the life-giving voice of things; to evade the warning of terror by lying, and to close one's eyes to the steep of the road of death.

It is to leave God to His fate.

## DUTY AND DEVOTION

As it is the duty of the stone to remain where it lies for the benefit of the whole, so it is the duty of the citizen to adhere to his vocation as a citizen. He who is hopelessly caught in the routine of society, and whose life consists in walking from his bed to his office, and back from his office to his bed, resorts to the word "duty" as a justification for his empty life. Those who have nothing to give to men but the satisfaction of fulfilled duty give them the submission of the stone instead of the happiness of the longing heart.

It is significance that makes duty something more than a mere emphasis of the element of compulsion. We become aware of the significance when we see things in their proper relations. Even the simplest action is a necessary part of the whole system, and may be viewed as a link in the chain of wholeness—as a step on the road towards holiness. The greater our devotion, the stronger our perception of holiness.

The communion with God is called *service*, this implying that those who attend it cast themselves down in the dust before God like servants. But with your devotion and the worship of your action you shall render *God a service* as a friend.

Unless the performance of our duty be pervaded by the rays of divinity it will not bring and promote our own freedom nor that of others. As we ourselves are weighed down by its burden and crushed by its claims, so do we press others down into humiliation, and crush them between the grinding stones of self-denunciation. Is it easier for the weak man to be reminded of his own weakness through our fulfilment of duty than it is for the criminal to be reminded of his crime through pardon?

## THE SECRET OF SALVATION

THE miracle that is worked the moment one finds one's beloved is not the regeneration of happiness and joy—not the rosy shimmer over timeless days, nor the starry stillness of deep blue nights—not faith as firm and unshakable as the rock, and not even the explanation of all inexplicable things.

Something rises. . . . It is one's own self. And yet not one's own self—something that existed as clay in the hands of the creator, and did not until this moment acquire living form—a self that includes, unifies, and lends value to everything we owned, and at the same time a non-self that streams abroad absorbing the sap of life from strange worlds which we had never hoped to reach. The rising movement is the fulfilment of power: there are no firmaments and no depths of human fulfilment but can be reached, and we aspire to nothing but the overflowing of the cup with all the things we reach.

But simultaneously, coupled with this rising movement from the bottom of our soul, something rises out of the world and comes to meet us in the shape of our beloved. And we feel that the movement in the hidden depth of the world is the same as the movement ascending from the inaccessible regions of our own darkened soul.

The miracle lies in that vision and in that emotion.

The miracle—the secret of salvation.

Darkness and wrath brood over the world. And the world is torn asunder eternally and irreparably, and one hates it because of its death. The beloved comes. . . . She is not a human being like other human beings. She is the power of radiation yearning in the depth of life below all shadows; she



is the reconciliation dreaming beyond all hateful feelings ; she is the eternal harmony of things beyond being and becoming.

The beloved is flesh and blood, like every other part of the wretched world of despair, that must suffer the pain of the flesh and be consumed in its lust. But her body is created out of a stuff that has the fullness of grace in redeeming bounty. And her blood is the warmest and most wondrous of all the miracle-working streams of the depths.

This is the secret of salvation :

When we leave the day behind us we sink its troubles and hardships into the abyss of the unconscious, there to be taken in hand by the creative trans-terrestrial forces. As the suffering of his past life is rendered back to the poet in transfigured form in his moments of inspiration, so does the effluence and redeeming power of the trans-terrestrial world come to meet us in the visions of the night. But when we meet our beloved everything that is and that has been blends in celestial spheres of union—pain vanishes, all cries of distress die away, despair is hushed . . . everything disappears in a vast and all-embracing nothingness. . . .

And out of this *nothing everything* emerges. Everything is elucidated, realised. And the all has become ours.

The secret of salvation resides in the indefatigable preparedness for the wonder to come, in the sacrificial power to relinquish everything in its way when the miracle is preparing . . .

In a longing to meet all the world as we meet our beloved. . . .

In the certainty that beyond the semblance and delusion of the visible there exist the same powers of beauty and love that created the figure of the beloved and set her in our way.

## SUNRISE OVER GOLGOTHA

ANGUISH drives me from my bed. Its heat has turned every pain into burning fire. I plunge into the night to be cooled: For I fear anguish—anguish is of one strain with anger. When I face a day unreleased from the hold of anger I hurt and tread upon those who come in my way. And I crucify the one I love above all.

Night, you are like my soul. In your dark forests and your limpid waters thousands of possibilities lie dormant. You do not know them. And in your impassive grandeur you do not heed them. You rest only in yourself. And you cloak everything that comes near you in your rest.

The darkness is filled with mists. And the mists are cold as if they were banked up over frozen countries. They envelop me as closely as if they would press the last drop of blood from my body. But their icy grip gives relief. Anguish relaxes, and a great stillness descends over the Golgotha of the heart. Night, you are the peace of death. But when you fill me I am filled also with the certainty that there is more of the plenitude of life to be found in your fathomless death than in the restless life of action that caused my trembling anguish and drove me out in the cold in search of help from you.

There was something that cried in the heart of humanity; it cried in a spirit of sacrifice, faith, and devotion; it tried to take on form; it called in mothers who in joy exultant aspired to a new generation, to be born out of their own wombs; it flashed up in tortured martyrs who raised their eyes towards heaven; it became fire on the tongues of prophets; it rose in visions of bliss from the souls of dreamers. . . . The more it cried and longed and prophesied, the more vociferous

became the shouting of the mob during humanity's journey to Golgotha. Wherever a solitary man stood up to bear witness to truth he was silenced by a loud cry that drowned all other sounds, the cry of "Crucify! Crucify!" The war made all the world into a Golgotha. Where is piety any more? Has not the jubilant song of the heart been silenced? Have not the heavenly visions faded? Darkness has descended upon the devastation, heavy and filled with anguish. . . .

Alas for each heart doomed to vibrate in accord with the vibrations of the world, and to feel its anguish as the beat of blood in swollen veins! And alas for every wretch ruled by instincts that forced him to cry in wrath against his will: "Crucify! Crucify!"

The mists are moving now, and in the growing light the borderland between heaven and earth can be dimly seen in the distance. Like a shudder proclaiming the nearness of death, dawn breaks over the world. Wait, O sun! Be merciful and wait another moment! The strength fails me to see the abomination of all the world revealed in your all-revealing light.

The mists glisten in the sun with shimmering hues as they withdraw playfully like ethereal entities. But they concealed no dead, frozen countries. Floods of rays pour down over farms embedded in lovely verdure, and in the flaming light sombre woods are changed into sacred groves. All sounds are fraught with wonder, and the chime of the bells calling men to the work of the day is strong and pure as the chime of Sabbath bells. All the world is in festive attire.

The hour when love is kindled is the glow of the rising sun. But the sun does not rise until you see the meaning of all you have had to suffer for the sake of your love, and your anger vanishes for ever. In the moment of sunrise all dead walls are changed into fleeting mists, and the grace of healing is showered down from the open heavens into the wounds inflicted by

crucifixion. Truth is no longer a mere guiding-star of the night that shines with a cold and remote radiance; truth fills your heart with warming life and your soul with the glory of renewal.

There is one joy which no anguish nor anger can destroy, and against which the agony of crucifixion falls back impotent. Should your suffering grow into an angry sea that would shatter your body and all your being into a mass of sinking wreckage, joy would nevertheless rise compelling out of the superabundance of suffering, and change the wreckage into a vessel that would glide smoothly over glistening waves.

There is a song. . . . Its pathos resides in the roar of hurricanes sweeping over ocean upon ocean, filling the wilderness with the concerted cry of human crowds for peace, again to sink down into the valleys where mortals live, to fill their woods with the sighing of infinitude. There is no eye but becomes humid from the spell of that song. When the lonely and forsaken meet each other, and behold each other with eyes purified by its tones, then all that caused separation is gone, and all hearts beat in one measure.

There is victory. . . .

O great moment, holiest hour of mankind, when the sun rises over the Golgotha of the earth, when all the throngs, astounded, see that the cross has disappeared from its height! And been replaced by a temple. . . .

I love you, night, who brood over the world with anguished darkness. For I know with a certainty that nothing can destroy that you hold everything—even the bliss of sunrise.



**PART V**  
**LIFE'S CLAIR-OBSCURE**



## THE SILENCE ABOVE ALL STREAMS

EVERY mountaineer knows, when he mounts towards the heights, that there will come a moment when all sounds cease. It is long since he left the valley with its rushing river and the woods with their playful brooks. He traversed waste lands and heard the roar from a waterfall in the distance grow fainter with every hour as he proceeded. He heard drops falling from the melting masses of ice and the purling noise from the streams among the naked stones. But on and on he mounted. And at last there was silence. . . .

I remember the moment when I discovered the silence as clearly as I remember the moment that has just passed. My heart was pounding from the effort of the ascent as though it would burst my frame. I looked out over the barrier of clouds I had just passed through in pelting rain; now it swam below me, extending wave upon wave in the dazzling sun. It was as though I had been living in an element other than the one I had been born to live in, and had only now reached a place where I could breathe. I laughed without knowing why. I wanted to go on and on—I did not care where; just onward, in a rapture of youthful delight.

Ever since, when even the greatest things seemed small to me, and even the wisest words too simple to inspire anything but disgust, I have felt the call of silence. I wanted to get up there to the silence, not knowing why. But for everything that broke me down I sought healing there.

I had no name by which to call the silence to come closer to my heart, and by which to implore it that its healing power might grow. If I called out: "You, almighty light—fullness of love—God!" I heard nothing in reply but the echo in the void,



and it was as though my voice had rebounded from all the things that circled in orbits eternally dead. But this emptiness was my purity. And in purity there was healing. This void was my pride. And my pride helped me to raise myself from my dejection.

Having once known silence I possessed it always as a secret of the heart that none could discover. When the tension of the will with which I held evil and the enemies of the spirit at bay yielded, and when I tried to find peace in contemplation, I could without fear let myself sink down through sphere upon sphere of anguish, pain, and error; I knew that having gone down through all that belongs to the world I should sink into the silence above the streams. And that I should arise renewed from my bath in its purity.

In silence there is no before and no hereafter, and my thought was born where gazing eyes are drowned in sunny space.

More beautiful than sunrise is the moment when the sun hovers as a half-embodied vision over the clair-obscure of dawn or the twilight of dusk. He who has experienced that moment above the streams knows that silence is never so pregnant with all the miracles it can work as just then. It was that moment which gave my thought name.

Once born, my thought accompanied me wherever I went and whatever I did. When in my youth I came near being caught in the abortive thoughts of the age and dying away in them, it saved me from the danger. When I could do no more—when I sank in the flood and was tossed about like a piece of wreckage by all kinds of waves—it reached out from the rock to save me. When I groped about for my work, where all things seemed equally futile and hideous, it was my thought that taught me to understand that something can be done by man—and I was saved once again.

There came a day when the void was filled, when silence quickened into life, and when the word "you" acquired a meaning, not as though someone had tried to interpret my nature in words, and still less as though someone had met me to deliver me from evil. As when eternity began to quicken into life, so the silence in which everything that belongs to eternity is born and dies was filled with the gladness and warmth of life. And the joy of creation arose in my soul, stronger than the rapturous joy of youth gazing out over unattained countries. The thought that had so far been a sustaining force became on this day a generative force.

As quietly as though I wished to hide that which had happened from all but the great silence, I whispered: "You, Heaven, who receive into your pure and lofty regions all that belongs to silence, you are like her who is no more, but who is here more than when she was actually present. Inscrutable as hers is your taking and giving. And when you are pervaded with the clair-obscure, you will be fraught with that beauty which made the glance in her eyes conquer death."

## MY THOUGHT OF THOUGHTS

THE law of the clair-obscure is the eternal law of poetry: one thing is lifted up in light, and another sinks into obscurity. But this shifting movement is not produced as a result of human evaluation; it is produced through inspiration, as an expression of the living forces in life, against which man is passive, although they operate through man. As corporality is the form of earthly life, and as the eternal circuit is the original form of the dead forces, so clair-obscure is the form in which universal life works and manifests itself. All that happens essentially and in the terms of universality derives its character from the clair-obscure.

¶ The hero stands alone in grim splendour on the pedestal where he was placed by the hosts he led to battle, and on whom he conferred the blessing of the law. He stands there as a symbol of what the masses strove for but could not attain, and as a monument commemorating the struggles and conflicts of centuries which found in him their master, and which he solved in unity. But remove from the pedestal the chorus of all those who were lowered into the nameless graves of the battle-fields; remove what sank into oblivion and *obscurity* while the hero rose in honour and *light*—and what remains? A man stronger, maybe, than others, but mortal as they are. It is all the invisible things murmuring round the hero that make the immortality of heroism; he who tries to find the nature of heroism elsewhere than in the clair-obscure tries in vain.

Remove equally from the mass-consciousness the assets of strength and life contributed to it by individuals, and which it seeks to deny; remove the light kindled in their eyes at the mention of the names of their great creators. Even though the whole past be forgotten, the rhythm which the past imparted

to growth will not vanish. Even though all names be blotted out, the thoughts and visions which once radiated around them will not vanish. And even though all lonely searchers be crushed down into obscurity by the mass instincts of their age as completely as though the weight of a thousand years rested upon them, they continue to move like quickening currents, none knows whence and none knows whither. Could we actually remove what apparently we succeed in denying, everything would cease, and the masses would return to chaos. But we cannot do this. Society's clair-obscure is eternal, and the sum of life hidden in this fact is inaccessible.

We live in and through contrasts. But it is not the struggle between these which makes life; still less the victory of one contrast over another; nor the victory of the mass over the individual, or of the individual over the mass, nor that of spirit over matter, or of matter over spirit; nor that of the conscious over the unconscious, or of the unconscious over the conscious. Life lies in *co-operation* between what sinks, to become invisible, and what rises, to become visible. Wherever we turn our eyes we see but variations of this all-controlling, basic theme of being; whether we try to understand man, the prime element of which society is built, or to reach the living whole that is the universe, of which society, in its turn, is but an evanescent reflection.

When that mighty movement takes place in our soul by which we exchange the unconsciousness of the sleeping for the consciousness of the waking state, the land of dreams recedes, and the world rises before our eyes as it appeared to us in all eternity; our thoughts take a certain direction, our will acquires purpose, and we believe ourselves free from all that fills the unconscious. But the eye trained by science sees that even our keenest thoughts are determined by impulses and by long-forgotten impressions and sights—that even in actions over which we believe ourselves to be masters we are slaves of that past which has sunk into darkness. The uncon-

scious follows us every second of our conscious life—not as *a harmless companion*, possibly casting his shadow over things, but as a *powerful agent* of good and evil; not in visible form, but invisibly.

When the process works in the opposite direction, and when, after the toil of the day, we sink into dreamless sleep, it seems to us as though the sights and thoughts of the day, and all we have been through during our life, had ceased to exist. But it follows us invisibly throughout the night, and invisibly influences our life, determining and creating; it follows us with all the impetus of tension which it possessed in the moment of action. Without this impetus we should not be able by creating to overcome dead resistances, nor to create symbols wherewith to liberate ourselves. Science has not only shown that the most fleeting dream-pictures are in every detail formed by things that have existed; it shows also that the pictures that emerge out of the invisible are charged with life of such ravishing beauty and appalling dread as rarely attend the images of daily life; it shows that our conscious experiences acquire their full force and potency only when, removed to the invisible, they pass into the formations of the unconscious.

This reversion through the clair-obscure, which happens to us all when we wake up from the night's sleep, is brought about in individuals of a searching mind in a mighty, all-comprehending form when they wake from the fermenting state of youth to the maturity of self-formation. They have been tossed between conflicting possibilities, reaching out now for one thing and now for another. Like suddenly kindled and quickly vanishing dream-symbols, their attempts at unification in the form of some hope, faith, or act, have followed one another in rapid succession—until all things abortive and unfit for life, all that time and heredity imposed, all things not in accordance with their nature, recede; and like the masses of light in space that meet in the sun, thence to pour over the

world, all the accumulated forces of the searching mind are fused together into the vision of self. But if all that which sinks were actually to disappear, then the self would be changed into an unsubstantial point, and the personality into a symbol of emptiness. It is all that sinks and becomes invisible which makes of the self a centre of force and a nucleus of growth; *it is all that which seems to disappear but lives invisibly, which is called spirit and atmosphere*; it is all this which gives to man redeeming power, and to his words the weight of gold. The greater the personality, the more imposing grows this background of mystery filled with life. Does it not seem at last as though his very glance came from vast depths, and as though the fullest wisdom lay even in the simplest word uttered by his lips?

The weak man always has the word "I" on his lips; it is as though to him the self were a chimera of whose reality he seeks to convince himself and others. He avoids anxiously all that may put his faith to shame. But he who has attained assured stability is not afraid of leaving his heights of solitude and contemplation to lose himself in the multiple variety of things. No more than the world ceased to exist when he attained the most sublime and unearthly unity does this unity cease to exist when he is divided by the dreamlike incoherence of worldly life; it has become invisible, and takes shape in all he touches; and every way of division becomes a way for the creative power of his spirit. The greatest personality was always considered that which without losing itself could express itself in all forms of human activity.

## BELOW US, ABOVE US, AND BEYOND US

THE clay moves and changes, and one form succeeds another, while the artist seeks his way to the image which is to release his life's longing. Each touch of his hands not only brings him nearer to the desired *reality* slumbering in the plastic material; it also leads him farther away from the *possibilities* that slumber in it, and which he desires to conquer. In order that he may attain his end the clay must harden in the final form of his creation. Lifted to the light, the real achievement must press all defeated possibilities down into darkness as long as it exists.

As it does in the clay, so the clair-obscure moves and changes in all forms of life. In these unlimited possibilities of variation lies the very *bedrock of existence*. But it does not only change; it stabilises also, and becomes fixed. This stabilising process is *the first condition for the development of individual manifestations*—whether we call these manifestations poems or men, or the universe, or whatever it may be. He who has not understood before the words “even because” must understand them now. Life and death are never more closely interwoven than at this ultimate point. It is not only in spite of this settling and fixation of the clair-obscure that we live and are what we are, but also because of it.

We are lifted into life on a wave of sensuality. As our senses awaken, as their bounds become extended and their strength is increased by all possible means, the image of the world strikes our eyes. But the senses are not there to bring us into harmony with the world as it is. They are there to turn life into certain paths. They help us to see, to hear, and to perceive one thing; but at the same time they help us to *avoid* seeing, hearing, and perceiving other things. Without this sifting process the

world of the senses would be a chaos; we ourselves should evaporate, and life would cease.

Our body is a living aggregate of more cells than there are people on the earth. Each of these cells lives a life of its own, has a social function of its own, and has a part in the responsibility of the organism. Every part of our body teems with moving masses, seethes with innumerable forms of activity: there are clashes, revolutions, migrations; wars are waged against foreign usurpers, compared with which our great wars are child's play. In drawing our attention to the outside world our senses have forced these happenings down into obscurity; they reach us only as *a general sense of pleasure and pain*—as vague and indefinite and meaningless as the subsiding noises of the metropolis that reach us from afar at night. And no more than we can perceive and experience through these vague noises what is taking place in the millions of human souls of the city, and in their mutual intercourse, can we by general perceptions come into living contact with that which happens in this community of cells on which we depend for our thinking, our acting and our being in every second of our life. These processes do not only temporarily disappear into obscurity; thanks to *the fixation of the clair-obscure* into forms not to be destroyed as long as we live in the world of the senses, they are for ever inaccessible. If the barriers were broken through, and if our self were swamped with all the messages that are now inhibited, our self would be dissolved and we should cease to exist.

As we live in and through *the community of cells* below us, so do we live in and through *the human community* above and around us. As we are what we are, thanks to the division of the former sphere of life into the accessible and the inaccessible, so also in regard to the latter.

Society does not reach us only through written and unwritten laws. It affects our life less openly, but all the more effectually



through traditions. But society develops in terms of the clair-obscure, and this implies the receding of all we do not need for our human fulfilment. In proportion as we become ourselves, and are perfected through action, society reaches us only as a general sensation of pleasure and pain, such as we experience through the cell state.

There is a more immense and inaccessible something "below us" than the body's community of cells, and there is a more immense and inaccessible something "above us" than the social state of mankind. Beyond the cells we catch a glimpse of forces and substances. It seems to us as though life sprang from these, and as though they themselves were dead. But if there existed some possibility of intimate association by which we could achieve harmony with that which happens in these forces and substances, our eyes would change and our hearts with them. . . . Beyond society we glimpse that universe of whose being and becoming the living mass of men and of society are but evanescent manifestations. Powerful masses move in impenetrable darkness, and like all movements that take place at an infinite distance, even these movements to us seem dead and subject only to mechanical laws; but there moves also something mysterious in the depth of our being. "The earth 'below us' and heaven 'above us,'" searching men whispered in awe when on fateful nights they reached out for the image that would deliver them from the torments of uncertainty.

There is also a "beyond us." Some perceive it more distinctly than others. Those who perceive it most, complain, saying that nothing is more disturbing than this.

Our senses are not created to receive only, but also to exclude. The eye absorbs certain rays; in shutting off all other rays it shuts off worlds whose existence we can only dimly suspect by circuitous ways. The fixation of this clair-obscure may break for a moment—we may awaken for a minute during

the night trembling with anguish caused by something that is happening in the distance. Or we may be overcome by "second sight" while engaged in our daily task. If, however, the fixation were broken constantly and definitely, and we were made to vibrate with all the things happening in the life-mass, life would cease.

There is a larger "beyond"—the most inaccessible of all and at the same time that to which we aspire most fervently. When the instruments of the body were formed and our senses took on shape it sank below; and our birth into the world was the seal of its disappearance. Those who are for ever looking for messages from the other side, thus striving to break the most solid form of the clair-obscure, do violence not only to this life but to eternity. If their efforts were successful life would disappear as certainly as the day would disappear if the night ceased to exist.

As we carry within us the life of the cell-state, wholly and completely, and are dependent upon it in all we do and omit to do; as we carry similarly within us, likewise wholly and completely, the aspirations and creative power of the masses, all that is implied in the term society, so also we carry within us even this "beyond us" in its fullness and completeness, and cannot escape our dependence on it for a single moment—but in invisible, not in visible, form. Thanks to the clair-obscure we can live in and through masses of life not our own without losing ourselves and without perishing among them. It is thanks to the same fact that we are able to live in and through universal life—in and through God.

## ON REPOSE IN BEING AND THE VALUE OF CHANGE

HE who would reach past everything runs the risk of achieving less than any good-for-nothing. I hovered between heaven and earth and between all forms of activity unable to find peace. This indecision was to me hell, especially as it seemed as inescapable as the eternal circuit. . . .

There are two things which prevent our spirit from resting in that being which is ours: one of them drives us on and the other drives us back; the one consists in *the dreams of the man of action* and the other in *the musings of the man of contemplation*. The one says: "To-morrow!" goading us on towards a mirage which vanishes as soon as we touch it. The other says: "Yesterday! Cleave to the happiness you have known, and to the paradise humanity once possessed; and beware of the ugly, delusive temptations of the future!" It drives us on and on; and when at last it relaxes its hold we find that we are sitting still in self-intoxicating dreams—beside the skeleton in the cupboard.

But everyone who has known the joys and sufferings of creative activity, and who has attained his goal, knows that there is a point where all harassing elements disappear, and where we reach the great repose in being. At this point everything from which our work has sprung is resolved into living harmony—at the same time we reach beyond our work and feel the same living harmony flowing toward us from that future to which our work admits us. This point of all-embracing plenitude of life is the moment of the clair-obscure; that which recedes has not yet receded utterly, and that which rises has not yet risen completely; we live in both, and there exist no bounds.

What is true of human creation is reflected in the vicissitudes of all that becomes, and he who in self-contemplation has learned to perceive what takes place within himself has time and again experienced the moment of clair-obscure. There is a point at which all that strives for liberation in the form of thought, plans, dreams, and feelings approaches its goal, and another point where it reaches full consciousness. Who is there who has never complained of life's futility when he has felt all that he most ardently desired turn to dissolution, obscurity, and annihilation at the very moment when he took hold of it with the whole force of his consciousness, and flamed up into certainty indescribable that the thing attained would never, never slip out of his hands? But the wise man who has reached the clair-obscure does not complain; radiant with the happiness of having conquered life, strong and valiant, he goes to meet the darkness, to find beyond it in forms undreamed of, a renewal of life.

There comes at last for all of us a moment of clair-obscure compared with which even the most crucial moment of clearly conscious change in the life of the man of genius pales away; he who has been brushed by the wing of death knows this. . . . Yonder the earth lies bare, bathed in the transparent autumnal air; its struggle in guilt and crime, in sacrifice and atonement has become manifest; the highest point we reached on our pilgrimage, in a state of half-consciousness of good and evil, was but an awkward stumbling of futile prayers . . . but now for the first time life grips it and lifts it up in the dazzling light. What we vaguely perceived as waves beating through our longing heart in great moments of ecstasy swells to an infinite ocean; and our throat contracts in the grip of something that is too great to be borne. Another moment . . . Time exists no more; all things are plunged down into the fathomless darkness where the cosmic immensities of the world of the senses lie hidden to him whose eyes are broken and whose hands no longer tremble with joy or pain. The magic spell is over . . . that which was hope at birth and fulfilment at

death is dissolved and has evaporated in timeless spheres, as though it had been but a fleeting dream of the night.

Whether you have reached the clair-obscure in its simplest and most ordinary or in its rarest and most exceptional form, one thing is certain: he alone attains repose in being who knows how to take care of what he has attained. For this is the Alpha and Omega of the art of living: to be able in happiness and suffering, in rising and falling, on the heights and in the depths, to preserve the certainty that all that happens is but the varying manifestation of the one fundamental form of existence which cannot be otherwise than it is. Nay, more: to be able ever to feel and realise this fundamental form as the one thing essential, and to let its variations slip past like superficial and indifferent things; to be able, even in the blackest agony of death, to hear an undertone of that ineffable bliss which flowed out of the light when it was clearest, and on the summit of life to be able to forgo even that which is dearest and plunge into the depths in the certitude of victory. . . .

There have been men who, during their journey on earth, lived in constant unchangeable repose in being. Whatever reached them they turned to good account; thus becoming immune to all evil. Whatever they did and whatever happened to them had significance and purpose, death itself was an obedient tool, a stride towards the consummation of life, and nothing but that. These people called themselves "Sons of God," and men worshipped them under that name. Who could reflect God's character of eternal repose and perfection better than they?

But the man who has never been able to whisper, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" for the simple reason that he has never felt himself sustained by a loving, omnipotent power, is closer to the core of being in his godless solitude than he from whose lips these words of despair escaped only in an exceptional moment. Repose in being is the one pole.

Fixation in its form is death, just as much as any other fixation. If being the son of God were associated with eternal bliss, this bliss would turn into eternal anguish as soon as the Son of God began to live and feel and love.

Men sought to solve the problem of the value of change by answering: Evolution. The eternal circuit having become insufferable, they substituted the straight line. But whether the straight line rises slowly along the lines of gradual improvement or soars suddenly in revolutionary defiance, it is as mechanically insufferable as the circle. Not even though, like the dazed bird, we soar directly to the sun do we succeed any better than he; we drop dead to the ground. Endless change is *per se* as dead and meaningless as is its opposite pole, unchangeable being.

He who has been tossed about in the world of change, and who has strained his forces to the uttermost in an effort to become what he has never been, and who has reached repose beyond change, knows that the nature of life is reciprocity. Being is woman; becoming is man. Being is repose and receiving in repose; becoming is change, and what is given forth in changing. He who has never succumbed to opposition, and thus has ever anew filled the beingless point of life with meaning, knows the value of change. Its name is not evolution but expansion, growth of life. And hand in hand with it, intensification of meaning and import, until it reaches the bottom of the depth called "repose in being."

After I had reached the clair-obscure I continued to hover. But it was no longer hell; nor was it heaven. It was the eternal rhythm in which life moves, and which pervades heaven and hell and what is in it. The hovering made me humanly attuned. What was my suffering but the suffering of the chord that trembles and vibrates, unable itself to understand the beauty of the music of which it is the source?

## DESTINATION AND PREDESTINATION

ONE cannot consider the idea of predestination without having first considered the idea of the eternal circuit—without having first focussed thought on the death-aspect of life. If one attributes predestination to “God’s decree,” nothing is changed thereby; for in so doing one makes God subject to a fixation of one kind with that under which the obsessed groans, and which one cannot understand without understanding the dead state of his soul.

But does not earthly life lie dormant in the invisibility from which it rises? As the day lies dormant in the night?

It happened once that I sat waiting for someone. When I had waited long in vain a dream I had had the previous night came to my mind, a dream of the very person for whom I was waiting. In this dream I expelled him from my life through the image of an accident. It suddenly dawned upon me that I had neglected to notify him, as agreed, of the place and the time of our meeting. I had myself to blame for having waited in vain. I had been like one asleep during the day, a passive prey to the night’s desire to repress. It was this that had caused my neglect and warped my memory.

In this way our nightly experiences, which become invisible on wakening, ever influence and determine all we do in the waking state. He who becomes aware of this fact may well wince and ask, affrighted: “My days of activity and struggle are, then, no more than an imprint of the matrix formed during the night, and in all their parts predestined by the invisible?” No wonder if another question follows the first: “When, on awakening to life, I am transferred to the sensory world out of the great darkness beyond the senses, is then all

that happens to me predestined by something that has already happened? Is this journey on earth, which to me seems full of a thousand adventures, and of the ardent energy of creation, nothing but a mechanical gliding along immovable tracks? Do we struggle in vain when we struggle against the direction given once for all?"

If "the eternal circuit" or "God's omnipotence" were our first and our last fact there would be reason for us to question and to be appalled. But it is not so.

When, on the above occasion, I went about like one asleep, I was not like one who, having been stunned, is insusceptible to that which happens to him. I was like one under the spell to inspiration, who listens to something of greater importance than the bustle about him. My listening was concerned with that will of the depths that had revealed itself in the repressive dream of the previous night. I submitted to the control of the will of the depths when, during the day, I suffered the repression to prevail upon all wishes of a more superficial nature. Accepting this destination, I pursued the path of my own destination.

And more: when our connection with the invisible world is intensified during the unconsciousness of the night, renewal takes place. The dream flashes forth as a witness of renewal; and as its annunciation. When, during the day, I pursued the road on which I had been started by the dream, and when by definite action I disburdened myself of the person whom my dream had killed, and who was an obstacle to my own renewal, then the annunciation came true. Thanks to my destination; thanks to my endeavour to reach my destination.

The same is true of life as a whole. It is our destiny to stand questioning, sacrificing, creating, in regard to the predestination that lies concealed in that which is above and below and



beyond us—in regard to the invisibility out of which visibility rises.

To define it more clearly: There is predestination in death. As certainly as we are predestined to sink into our grave, having been borne by our mothers, so, when our essential self is being formed in timeless spheres, we are predestined to become part of the eternal circuit. But there is destination in renewal. As certainly as our journey from the cradle to the grave is something more than the sinking of the stone from the surface of the water to its bottom, so our journey through the timeless spheres is directed by a destiny—and the destiny of earthly life is a phase of this destiny.

## THE MEANING

WE ask what is the meaning of our life, and in so asking we are imprisoned within the narrow limits which the word "our" and the word "I" imply. For in so asking we have nothing in mind but the visible things which the word "I" stands for in virtue of the fact of symbol-formation; not the infinitely greater invisibility which forms the essential basis of its nature, and which at every moment of our life affects its course. Can we see the meaning of a poet's life, can we survey it with reference to the age it embodies and the spheres from which inspiration has reached him, without taking into account the hearts his rhythms will move, even if they should lie unborn and dormant for centuries to come? Neither can we see the meaning of a single dream-picture without taking into account the invisible enclosed in it, to which it imparts living existence.

There are moments when we feel ourselves raised above the details of our lives and able to achieve a survey; when we discover consistency where before we had seen but chaos, and feel ourselves not as "selves" but as parts of a totality. In these moments we experience the meaning. We do not see through it as we see through a lens in the microscope; we experience it in a way that is infinitely more important, as an undertone of life, as a tangible, inescapable fact that commands emotion, reason, and everything else.

In the great moments of meaning and purpose we are passively receptive. When in our greatest moments we rise in ecstasy, we become tense in listening and dare not touch anything in the finite world that vanished from our eyes in the shadows below us—as if we feared that the slightest contact with things would disturb that which is being wrought,

and which is of more consequence than anything else. Then, at the climax, we feel the futility of reason when the essential is concerned, and the inefficacy of forcible methods where we search for meaning in life.

It is with meaning as with healing; it is not of any man's doing—it is grace. It is inherent in life. But we do not always see it. He whose body has been injured partakes of the grace of healing if his body is still capable of the power and will to renewal. He who in his course towards truth and consummation has to pass through crises will likewise be helped by the healing forces of the soul. He who, severed from all connection, staggers under the burden of meaninglessness, will see flashes at times—unless by his own folly and by blinding himself he has barred the path of the light that seeks to reach him. Those who mortify and stunt themselves by killing their physical nature in the desire to force the soul into ecstatic flights of which it is incapable of itself are like one who should wound his own hand in order to observe the process of healing. But the wise man gratefully believes that he has had glimpses of the meaning, in strong confidence that it will come to him in a fuller measure when the moment arrives.

We do not live to impart a meaning to that which is meaningless, thus creating an illusion for ourselves and others to live on. Our attitude to meaning should be the attitude of the physician to the process of healing, when he removes all obstacles, that it may come about in the fullest possible measure; it should not be that of the turner who makes crutches for the lame. We live to receive, and in creative preparedness to fulfil the meaning that comes to us from the invisible. That we may achieve our own fulfilment, and that of the world.

If there were a meaning in life of the kind for which the majority ask when they come with their questions to the learned and the religious, the prophets and quacks—a meaning manifest to all people, given once for all, provable and shaped

out in definite forms—then, not until then, would life become wholly and irrevocably meaningless. Not only in its outer course of events, but also in the core of its being, the life of every man would be nothing but a reiteration, a reflection of this meaning—i.e. nothing in itself. The universal meaning would stand as an inanimate and insuperable wall barring the way to individual meaning. And what we desire is, after all, a meaning for “my own life”—for the shaping of life in the form and the being that bears our own name. Whenever we would reach out for our individual meaning we should be repelled by the meaning given once for all. And we should feel like the man in the desert who finds gems instead of water.

## THE MYSTIC AND THE REALIST

THERE have always been some who have kept their eyes fixed on *the invisible*, and others who have refused to know or acknowledge anything but the *visible and tangible*. Thanks to the clair-obscure, all visible things became invisible to the mystic. Turned away from the world and plunged in contemplation, he became one with the invisible and whispered the word "God." . . . Thanks to the same clair-obscure, all invisible things vanished into nothingness and became inaccessible to the realist; and when at last he saw nothing but forces and laws he whispered the word "God." The bulk of men, who want nothing wholeheartedly, but desire to escape all difficulties, have in all times wavered in confusion and uncertainty between the visible and the invisible. This confusion and uncertainty they have called "God."

He who understands the clair-obscure understands that the mystic and the realist are but heart-beats of eternity in the life of men. Far from counteracting and ruling each other out, these two currents of the ages form together the rhythm that lifts humanity out of chaos and carries it on through existence. All those who in genuine devotion either come to perceive the rising or the falling of the rhythm perceive also one side of the truth. But the *whole* truth is perceived only by him whose ear has become so keen and whose heart so sensitive that he can fully catch *the highest and the most heavenly as well as the lowest and most earthly notes*; he alone walks the way of wholeness and holiness.

The thoughts of the mystic hovered constantly around what, trembling with longing and sighing with suffering, he called the *unio mystica*. He knew that even though all human hearts could be fused, and even though the world could be created

anew of this fusion, it would be of no avail. Earthliness raises life against life in struggle and destructive desire; and ere long the new world would resemble the old. Only from trans-terrestrial spheres that are hidden to the unbeliever, but revealed to the believer, can come the strength wherewith to conquer all that hinders the achievement of communion.

When the realist dissolves the world into separate things and proves that each is a miracle of independence by itself, it would seem as though he trampled the mystic's hope of communion into the dust. But men can only meet and commune after the process of individualisation has released them; and each time we see a thing develop and become itself under its own conditions of existence we feel an increased communion with the whole. But the great decisive advance on the way that leads to the *unio mystica* did not take place until the realist, dissolving the human soul into its fundamental elements, discovered that the unconscious and the conscious, the invisible and the visible, mutually condition each other. From being an indefinite faith and hope, the invisible and its omnipresent influence became a scientifically clear and established fact. After this baptism in the fire of knowledge the mystic had only to proceed on his way: and lo! when he opened his eyes, he saw that the invisible is the same indispensable factor in the formation of the world as it is in the making of man.

To the crowd God was in all times a master, ruling by action, to whom it looked for assistance in its own wicked pursuits; to the mystic He was just as naturally the power emanating from the invisible which waked the heart to life and turned the invisible into a living heart.

When the realist applied the lever of science to the visible world, and resolved all that happens into complexes of forces, one might have thought that the world of the mystic and his living sense of the world would have vanished for all time into

the darkness to which it was mercilessly expelled. But this was not so. For man was also part of the world, and man became the path into life's infinity. The realist continued his investigations, and it became clear to him that in man all dead paths of force are caused by the struggle of life, and are but petrified relics of that struggle. Thereupon the mystic could again lift his pilgrim staff, and cry out in newly kindled enthusiasm: "I see! I see! Formerly the active life of the All, enduring beyond visibility, death, and fixation, was a faith, a hope towards which I sought in vain to lead the masses. Now it is a fact. As the scientist has shown this fact to exist within man, just so will he disclose its existence within the vast communion between all things from which man sprang, as a flower springs from the earth. I shall feel the heart of the universe throb in my breast more fully and warmly than ever I could have done without his help; and all men will be led on to conversion of their own accord."

As naturally as the fish lives in water, the *mystic* always lived in the *symbol*, cultivating inspiration and endeavouring in ecstasy to reach those spheres beyond the ordinary in which unearthly visions meet the praying. What were all processes of creation within the world of the visible if even when combined they could not fill the heart with the joy it felt at the moment of each revelation?

Mercilessly as the *realist* dissolved all things into their first elements, he also dissolved all symbols. It would seem as though he squeezed the blood out of the mystic's heart when at last he put even the fact of symbol-formation into the crucible, as if it were an accessible fact of nature, and nothing but that. But in so doing he turned men's eyes from the individual, perishable symbol to the origin of all symbols in the imperishable; he saved the mystic's heart from stereotyping in the endless forms of the invisible. He became the force that uplifted those who pray in exuberant ecstasy, and made them see the world's essentiality rising from darkness in a

new form—not as a sign of the sun, not as a crucified man, not as a monument over the devastated home of the generation: he made them see the visible, illumined by the fact of symbol-formation as a vision of God's nature.

When all powers conspired against the *mystic* in an endeavour to show that he has no business in a world where all things pivot around the hard struggle of necessity, he had, in the end, but one answer to offer: "Do you not see, shortsighted ones—fools running after wind and mirages—that *redemption* will never come to you from the false world of the visible? Why quarrel about unessentials instead of awaiting in tears and prayer the hour of the miracle?"

But the *realist* met him even at this point: "I shall exploit all the forces of heaven and earth which I have discovered, and with the aid of fire, air, and water, I shall deliver humanity from hunger, cold, and disease, from revolution and spiritual distress. Thanks to the fixation of all things into lawbound forms—thanks to the necessary order from which you are seeking to avert the eyes of men—the deliverance of the world will come to pass. I shall save those misled by dreams; I shall *do* what you are *dreaming* of doing." Wherever the realist went the mystic followed silently in his footsteps. When the realist saw the fixed forms of stabilisation called *time and space* dissolved, the mystic drew breath again, happy because timeless spheres opened above him; and when the realist finally saw that the world's fixation into a mechanism was no more the highest, ultimate expression of the nature of the Absolute than the fixation of the individual into the form of self is the last fact of existence, the mystic felt redeeming life streaming over him from timeless spheres. From the summit of earthly reality he stretched his hands heavenwards, sending words of prayer out into space: "You silence above me, you producing, generating, renewing invisibility—you that are the hope of my heart and the rock of my faith—fill all the world and all that is in it as utterly as you fill me at this moment. All the



forces that free us are but river-beds for the warm currents which incessantly and irresistibly stream forth from your nature!"

Whoever finds the clair-obscure becomes both a *genuine* mystic and a *genuine* realist. And when in the depth of his being he feels the heart of the universe beating with the rhythm of the clair-obscure, he reaches beyond wholeness and attains holiness.

## THE MORASS OF FALSE PATHS

As long as we repose in the being, and live creatively in the becoming, of the vital growth of our expanding life, our earthly clair-obscure is attuned to the universal clair-obscure. Having become purified manifestations of that spirit of union and communion, of effluence, of symbol-formation and the power of redemption out of which the worlds rise and into whose depths they sink, we have found *the way*, and all transformations, even the transformation of the body into crumbling dust, signify merely a change in passing forms, but not a change in what is permanent and essential. Pursuing this way we pursue our journey on earth in indestructible eternity.

Compared to this conquest of life nothing else matters, and if we were to lose what we have gained our thoughts might circle around many things, but behind the circling thoughts there would always dwell the sole thought of recovering what we have lost. If we cannot reach it in reality we substitute illusions—we stray from one false path into another.

The magic god stands as a guide at all the false roads that lead to the morass of thought.

When the primeval savage first became aware of death he was stricken with fright, and he looked round for something, for anything, to which he could resort in his endeavour to avoid the horror of destruction. He discovered then the breath of the dying and his heart was relieved. "The spirit survives; the spirit passes unchanged from earth to heaven; the spirit is part of God who stands eternally and immutably above death in His omnipotence." *The learned went on sifting things into the antithesis "spirit-matter," thus disrupting continuity and creating a thousand insoluble problems. They*

made of God a safe stronghold, a refuge for all cowards and for all who feared; and thus life itself became an insoluble problem. And as such life became terrible. The savage still survives in all of us.

To the many in whom the savage predominates renewal is even more terrifying than death.

A great personality desires destinies of great dimensions, and release even from that which keeps him in the harshest bonds. But the smaller the individual the more he fears change; what is new to him is always suspect. If, perchance, a mighty emotion arises in his withered breast he shrinks back fearfully and flees like one possessed; he does not recover and become himself again until he has dragged the emotion down to the level of the commonplace and has resumed his usual jog-trot on the highroad. Even if the man of the crowd accepts death as a way of destruction, he is unable to accept it as a way of renewal—to accept the revolting fact that some time he will be compelled to pass through a renewal that exceeds all the limits of everything he has thought and seen, desired and yearned for. Always he has honoured only the prophet who could say reassuringly: "Fear not! The spirit does not change. On the other side of death it is the same as here. The roads and highways in heaven do not differ from the roads and highways on earth." People believed the prophet; for he preached what the mass wanted to believe: that God does not change. Thus was the world corrupted. For what remains when the possibility of renewal does not shine over it? Frustration and impotence.

He who has experienced the renewing force of extraordinary moments, of ecstasy, asks himself: "Why are we not always carried through life on a miracle?" The reply is simple: "We are; sleep is the miracle, dream the ecstasy." But, led astray by the magical god, men created out of their own fancy an ecstasy that was to rise towards endless heights, perpetual harmony, and unchanging communion with God. And they landed in the

impasse of exaltation, or else they broke down, collapsing into the pandemonium of the demented, where they listened enraptured to the song of the angels or cursed the ugly tongues of the demons—either the one or the other, it did not matter.

The grace of healing was discovered, and was corrupted like everything else. God Almighty, the overflowing source of grace, is above disease, suffering, and death, and exalts those who believe in Him above the empty fancies of disease, suffering, and death. He who would be recognised as a "Son of God" must be able to cure disease and raise people from death. When people sank into the morass whither the false roads led they made their last moments bitter by reproaching themselves for lacking faith. Had they only, while there was yet time, denounced themselves for lacking purity!

There were those who, disgusted with the impurity of mysticism, made a clearance of it. Having laid down the laws of the world's mechanism with the conscientiousness of science, they believed that they were free from the magical god. But he still haunted the desolate halls. What was the theory of all-death but a protest against the theory of all-life, equally hollow and unreal?

Then people resorted to *Evolution*. Thanks to evolution, the wheels revolve faster to-day than they did yesterday, and the masses are crowded together more desperately now than they were a hundred years ago; thanks to evolution, everything grows and becomes more perfect, and everything rises automatically towards the goal of redemption. Onward, therefore! The maddening race accelerates. But why is the goal no nearer? Why does it glide away into an ever-darker distance? Why?

Adjusted to the idea of evolution, we see all things relating to the rising of the life-curve set off in an ever-stronger light; and at the same time all that relates to the descent of the curve towards dissolution and death sinks ever deeper into obscurity;

we see the universe as a mechanic process of the rising out of something unknown toward something else equally unknown. Another attempt to escape death—a flight to the magical god who stands for the constantly rising and constantly perfecting movement. God becomes a fantasy of madness. There is no evolution in this sense; there is but death and renewal eternally conditioning each other, and eternally enriching the meaning of life.

The clair-obscure is the footbridge that leads across the morass of false paths. Beyond it there opens *the* path.

## THE WAY, THE GOAL, AND THE FULFILMENT

IF you walk along a road with a clear objective in your mind, your intention of reaching the goal will shut out what the road might offer; you will not see the fields, nor hear the birds; you will not take time to stop to talk to those you meet. If the goal of our journey on earth had not been placed in the invisible, our journey would have lacked essence and purpose. As it is, the existence of the goal stands to us not as an answer, but as a question. The constant quest endows all things that come in our way with interest; everything becomes dear and wonderful to us, as a husk enclosing a great holiness. To attain fulfilment is not to attain the goal—least of all if we believe the goal to be a final reply to all questions; to attain fulfilment is to achieve perfection as a wanderer.

The way is a common highway; the roads for the select are roads for the conceited. But with its curves and its preference for wide prospects the road still bears evidence of the first path beaten by searching man through the wild. He comes more rapidly to the goal who stops again and again with uplifted heart than he who rushes off, his heart near the point of breaking. For the goal is not to be found in the terminal point—not in death; the goal is renewal. There was a time when those who longed for renewal through a sacrament of purification were shut up in wells, to be soaked with the blood of the sacrificed animal. To him who can see aright and hear aright no gestures are required. To attain perfection as a wanderer is to experience every sight of the earth and the enveloping warmth of the sun as a sacrament of purification.

The way is a way of conflicts. The purpose of life is not to throw off our conflicts, for in so doing we throw them upon others. The purpose is not to escape them, the purpose is to

make them creative—for ourselves and for others. The hardest of all conflicts is the one that overtakes us when we see the beloved lowered into the grave: should one follow her, leaving the earthly life to disappear in a distance so remote that all men become like stones and all pursuits like dust? Or should she become a memory and an effluence of eternity? When even this conflict has become creative, for the earthly life as well as for eternity, we have attained fulfilment.

The way is the way of solitude. And the goal is the home. But note this: however lonely you may be, you have a constant companion—not your shadow, not your suffering, not your friend; but something that lives in all the things that live around you, and closer to you than your shadow, your suffering, and your friend. See to it that you do not tire your companion with constant questions; to enjoy nature's mood in a spirit of unison is more important than to know the names of all plants and stones. It is on the atmosphere that the sense of home depends. He who has attained perfection as a wanderer find his home everywhere. And through him every place becomes a home.

You shall not begin the day with a prayer; you shall begin it with a question—this question: "If my life-way should end before another night has come, what is it I would wish most to have accomplished this day?" Then you shall make of the day a prayer in action, that you may come as close to the goal as possible, and that you may be able to end the day with a whisper of the heart that is a thanksgiving rather than a prayer: "May it be vouchsafed me to live another day!"

As with the day, so with life. For him to whom it has been granted to walk to the end of his way and to reach the goal it is as easy to die as it is for the withered leaf to fall. But fulfilment implies also that death should become an overflowing of the cup—not only to ourselves but also to others.

## THE POET

WHEN the rustle of the wings of death is heard approaching the union of two human beings something stirs in their hearts as well; and this movement signifies that the forces of renewal are seeking that which most intimately bound them together. Some perceive this stir, however faint it be, behind the noise of conflict and the turmoil of the days; they listen imploringly to this faint thing which through them strives to become strong, and as they listen all things dead and dying sink into darkness. Something else rises, and there comes a day when the fact of communion will again be the happiness of union. But there are others also who do not perceive anything; they go their way in hatred and wickedness, never to be reconciled with one another, with themselves, and with life. What is it that distinguishes the former from the latter?

It is poetry; it is the clair-obscure. Those who have poetry and the clair-obscure in their souls are tremulous echoes of the invisible, and catch the beating of its transforming waves. But those in whom poetry has disintegrated into commonplace words, and in whom the clair-obscure has set in commonplace forms, know only will and desire, reason and opinionativeness—and the desolate empty shell of things.

Even the simplest poem signifies a process of reversion in the human soul, as a result of which *one* thing vanishes in obscurity—a blow of fate, a tormenting night, a hideous sight: while at the same time *another thing* rises to the light—a movement of defiance, a warming glance, an exalting vision. A poem attains greater depths in proportion as its audible words and visible images disappear, to give precedence to its rhythm and glamour, and all that bears witness to the invisible worlds. When, undisturbed by unessential things, we experience



rhythm, that rising and sinking movement with the power of renewal over our hearts, we experience the movement which is the fundamental of existence. And when, purified of the efforts of will and the demands of reason, the rhythm reaches us in tones, it brings us into a closer accord with reality than anything else could do.

The tragic part of the life of the poet lies in the fact that death and life are inseparable. Ecstasy consists not only in soaring to share in the vital spheres of the invisible; it involves also the opening up of the abyss, the intensification of the rhythm of death and renewal to the point of breaking. The greatness of the poet lie in his affirmation of the tragic and his courage to accept death. He is saved when he has advanced so far in wisdom and mastery that he no longer experiences death as a pain and a revolt, but only as a rest, a preparedness, an abiding, and when he elicits from death values as great as those of life. Then, but not until then, does he become a guide for humanity, the humanity that should be able to live wholly and fearlessly in the rhythm of which earthly life is one phase and life in the trans-terrestrial spheres the other.

Primitive man beats his gods to obtain a share of their power. How many an abject and unfree poet has not tortured his beloved in a vague hope that her despair would move the heart that nothing else could move and make the rock give forth water? He must go farther down into death to reach the hidden stream of life—and to attain the redeeming fulfilment of love. When your beloved dies and you do not feel responsible for her death, then truly you have not loved her. If, again, you are not raised from your contrition by a miracle, then truly she did not love you. He who has not tasted the bitterest dregs of the chalice of death does not know the mystery of love.

## THE THINKER

THINKERS speak of abstraction, i.e. looking-away-from, and make of abstraction a way to the peak of their system of thought. But do they realise the significance of what they do? Do they realise that what sinks down as a result of the abstraction does not *actually* vanish, and that truth is never to be found in that which is lifted up through such displacement, to become visible to all? Do they realise that the tinsel star which they placed on the top of all, where their system tapered off into a single formula of thought, had nothing to do with the lode-star of eternity? Had they understood this they would have spoken not of abstraction, but of the clair-obscure.

What does it matter if one man, out of the disintegration of unity into the multiplicity of things in which we live, singles out "mind," to turn on it the full searchlight of the spirit, while at the same time he presses all that is opposed to "mind" down into darkness and unreality?—or if another chooses "matter" instead, and lifts it so high into the light of thought that all other things appear as its shadows—or if a third selects the "will-to-power," a fourth "the struggle for life," a fifth "duty," and a sixth "creative evolution? . . ."

That which seems to disappear does not actually disappear; it is changed into an undertone, a mood, a sense of infinity, a voice, and an atmosphere. It is out of this invisibility that the system grows up as a symbol, just as the visible world grows up from the invisible world-substance. The more rarefied the air becomes around the idealist, the keener is the perception which he conveys of the devastating struggle of matter from which he broke loose in his longing to realise the human in himself. The more loudly a philosopher of power thunders of the right of the superman, the more distinctly do we hear

the powerless heart's lament and the calls of distress of those who go under. The man who scorns society preaches the purity and happiness of solitude, and in so doing he betrays a longing for that union with the world which his encysted timidity prevents him from attaining. Remove this undertone of contrast from the thinker's world of thought, and its human value also will disappear. Where before we heard the beating of the heart we hear but the rattle of the dead bones of learning. If the system tries to become something more than a symbol of wholeness shaped out in the clair-obscure, it becomes less than nothing; if it tries to become more than a witness of truth it becomes a manifestation of untruth.

Inconsistency was always an objection. But it is with this as with mis-speaking: just because it unintentionally expresses that which we deny, it reveals truth in a fuller measure than our intentional words. And what is more important: it prevents fixation, thus holding distraction at bay. Too much consistency is ever shadowed by distraction, like an appalling ghost. No light can banish the ghost—only the clair-obscure.

It is not the task of the thinker to solve the problem of orientation, nor to create a perspective of things and of trans-terrestrial being that would be valid for all time. His vocation is to make the problem—that is, the rhythm of death and renewal that is the clair-obscure—conscious, and to prevent the perspective from assuming fixed and definite forms. That thinker is not the greatest who is able to give the best answers to men's questions; he is the greatest thinker who in the widest measure becomes a help to the greatest variety of people in their search for the replies that will satisfy *them*.

There have been thinkers who have passed through all systems, one after the other, just as the sun, having passed through the sign of Cancer, enters that of the Lion, and then proceeds to the next sign. Every new symbol was a force of renewal at the moment when they encountered it. Rejecting

one thing after another, they themselves became symbols of the relative element in all values that have been; and at the same time of that susceptibility to change and movement which lives creative on the farther side of all limitations. There were other thinkers who were never understood. . . .

But we are quickly done with that which we understand completely; we throw it away like a toy, and it ceases to have any value for us. There are thoughts which we do not understand, but which we are unable to dismiss; they attract us with the power of their spirit, and with the lure of a tremulous voice; we feel that there is something in them that grows and lifts and sustains, but we do not know whence the growing, lifting, and sustaining element comes. It is through his incomprehensibility that God becomes man's power for growth, his uplifting blessing and sustaining glory.

The groping word is often greater than the definite word. For behind the groping there is the greatness of humility; but behind the definite assurance there lies but the smallness of self-assurance.

## THE RESEARCHER

If there were no paths of death in our soul, no mechanisation of the soul, we should never become aware of the eternal circuit in space, nor of the mechanical order into which we have been fitted. As our eyes are instruments enabling us to obtain a visible conception of the world, determined by the rays perceived by the eye, so the fixation of our inner being into given forms constitutes the tool by the aid of which we become masters of the order of the world and make of it a protecting wall around our home.

A researcher by the grace of God is the only one who can cause all the living, renewing elements insusceptible of any order to recede as absolutely as if they had never existed, and who can become as much at one with the paths of death in his soul as though nothing else existed. For he alone achieves that over-susceptibility to the eternal circuit which leads to a deeper understanding of its nature.

How often did I not leave the learned and their curves and endless details in despair! But when I came to see the sacrificial service which they are performing, towards the redemption of us all, I bowed my head in veneration.

## THE PHYSICIAN

THE physician is the most absolute contrast to the researcher. For him the circling, the constantly recurring, the mechanical elements must recede into distant depths and become unessential. He must live in that which constantly renews itself, in that which vanquishes death, and can never be conceived in mechanical formulæ: he must strive to realise the grace of healing in living matter, in souls, in society, in life. If he is absorbed by the circuit and loses faith, he is lost—and will himself disseminate the suffering which he was called upon to annihilate.

But if he loses that buoyancy of soul which he must possess, to be able ever anew to descend into the world of research, thence to fetch the arms for his battle with evil, then he, too, will be lost. He will become then as a powerless creature who stretches his hands towards heaven in prayer instead of using them for the purpose for which they were meant. His salvation lies in the capacity of readjustment, in the clair-obscur.

And more: the physician must not only descend into the world of research. He must go farther down, to the very bottom, to the very death of which all things circling are a symbol. His power to heal lies precisely in the fact that the acceptance of the suffering and death of his fellow-men, which to others would cause destruction, becomes to him a means of achieving buoyancy and freedom of the soul.

Compassion—not in feeling but in action—that in dying with the dying he may achieve the consummation of life.

His must be a suffering so intense that it would shatter his soul if it did not instead shatter the boundary between the soul

and the world, overflowing in all directions to merge with universal suffering; a fulfilment of union—not in love, not in community of fortune, not in common prostration under pain, but only and solely in union; and by this very absence of human elements a redeeming force of a superhuman order; in virtue of the grace of healing which pervades all worlds, and which is the aspect of God's nature that the physician was born to reveal.

## THE PROPHET

THE prophet, the voice of eternity among the men of time, has always evoked anger and conflict. The goal to which he pointed was world-renunciation. The majority rebelled against his message. Those who accepted the message were drawn into conflict with themselves and into hatred of the world.

Eternity is not an infinite sequence of centuries. Eternity is our participation in the timeless spheres that exist deep within all of us, and from which rays break forth in happy moments to form a halo around the world-symbol of decay. Eternity is that warming stream of the depths wherein all things essential have their source and origin. To preach eternity is not to preach renunciation of the world; it is to indicate to men the only point from which the world may be stormed in an ecstasy of conquest.

He is not a prophet by the grace of God who can let the world recede as utterly as if it had no value; nor he who says: "I am sending you my message from a distance beyond which none of you can penetrate with his eyes, and from which none returns. My words are no longer words; they are like stones that from the void of space drop down on earth, there to lose their glow and become stones like other stones—the only difference being that they do not come from the void, but from the overflowing of love; incandescent are they with the inexhaustible spirit of God."

Only he who measures the road from the infinite to the finite with one stride deserves the name of the prophet; only he who feels that the tiniest creature is pervaded with essentiality; only he who can say: "The eternal circuit may demand that, following my path through space, I shall circle through



every life of man, every creature of the earth, everything that is, in the same manner as the world-body must travel through space upon space. Eternal righteousness may demand that he who faces me to-day as my enemy shall to-morrow be the shell that encloses my own being, and that I shall sustain his suffering as if it were my own. One thing is sure: if you would win the seal of eternity and fulfil the demands of righteousness to the full you must live as if that were the case. Therefore, I will regard every erring man as though he were my own self in search of the way. And I will watch over every lost thing as though the thing were my own self, longing to be caressed into life."

## THE HUMBLEST OF THE HUMBLE

HE who promises the poor the seats of the rich and the mighty is like one who reaches out his hand to give alms and deals a blow instead. Not only does he give them a lie that will make them exalt themselves, but he robs them as well of the values of humility, which are greater than human greatness. The leaves trembling in the tree-top are not better than the root working in the deepest darkness: could both grasp the truth to the full the happiness of the latter would indeed be greater than that of the former. The visible is the shell that encloses the core of the invisible. And the only thing important for us is to come as close as possible to that which upholds life.

On my way I have met some of the greatest poets and thinkers of the age, and I have been seated among prophets whose names were on every man's lips. But none gave me that joyousness of the soul that makes life a wonder. In all of them there was too much of the hardness of the shell, or of the disguise of the shell, or of the forbidding gesture of the shell. With their great gifts they cavilled at God. But they did not possess that mastery of giving and taking which alone deserves the name of God.

But one day in the autumn I met an old woman on the road in the neighbourhood of my home. Her back was bent, and she tottered painfully onward, step by step. She handed me a bowl filled to the brim with berries. I realised how many thousand times she had bent down in pain, with trembling hands, to pluck the fruit from the stem. And now she had accomplished the thing she had dreamed of for months, and could reward me for a gift she had received from me one Christmas Eve.

Life was never richer to me than in those moments when, forgetful of myself and weighed down with the pain of the world, I bent to the ground to pick truth upon truth from its mystery. What are we all but disappearing specks of dust? Only in accepting our own disappearance do we become ourselves—do we come into being.

Like this woman, I should wish to offer my bowl of sacrifice to a stranger on the road as a token of gratitude for what I have received without asking. And like her I should like to disappear as the humblest of the humble, well knowing that I have never barred the way to any human being, and filled with certitude that being gone I shall never cause contention, nor become a wall of death separating two hearts that search for each other.

## HOLINESS GROWS

As I wandered at night through the turmoil of the city I suddenly found myself facing a temple. It was unlike all temples I had seen before, being at once more bound to earth and striving more towards heaven. But its earth-bound quality was animated with a sense of liberating devotion. And it strove heavenwards not with subtle antennæ, but with columns capable of carrying the weight of the firmament.

I entered the temple. By the faint light of a ring of flickering flames that illumined the vaulted spaces I glimpsed a listening crowd of men. I did not know what was happening, but I heard a voice saying :

“Lonely and understood by none, the pilgrims of holiness wandered over the earth. And even if a thousand years separated one from the other they found one another. No circle of human community is closer than theirs. What the one thought the other spoke. But the many who understand nothing of the things of holiness did not understand that union and communion which knows no bonds. They made prophets of the holy. And in a desire to experience themselves the pleasure of contention they set the prophets at variance with one another. But holiness grows, despite all those who are greedy for power, and puts all fools to shame.”

Suddenly the temple vibrates with the peal of the organ and I see the masses sink down on their knees. Someone is to be committed to death. Like a man killed in action, carried on a stretcher from the battlefield, she lies in the centre under the immeasurable vault. The light from tall tapers illumines her pale, peaceful features, and I see the preacher bow his head in devotion. I hear him speak :

"One of the pilgrims of holiness has fallen. And this is her message:

" 'I believe in death; and I believe in renewal.

" 'I believe in God's death in all the dead orbits in which suns and planets move, and in which the forces move in my own body. And I believe in God's renewal in every life that is born, in every pulse that goes warming through the heart of man, and in every day that is kindled in the sky.

" 'I believe in salvation.

" 'I believe that the hammer-strokes of will against the resistance to freedom and the wailing of the heart in its extremity may pave the road to salvation. But the fullness of salvation is only to be found in the participation of the searching spirit in God's death, and in the participation of the jubilant heart in God's renewal.

" 'I believe in eternity.

" 'I believe that neither death nor renewal is part of eternity. All spheres of eternity brim with that clair-obscuré in which death and renewal alternate and merge again to separate. Being master of the clair-obscuré I experience eternity each day and each hour—whether I live or die.' "

When the preacher was silent I saw the people rise and move slowly forward, hoping to come closer to the dead one. Again the voice of the preacher was heard, and this time it spoke as a friend speaks his last to a friend:

"Through you, pilgrim of holiness, holiness will grow. It may grow only in the soil where your feet trod, and in the things which you caressed with your hands, and in one lonely, forsaken heart. Or it may spread like daybreak over great

countries, filling longing throngs with hope and faith. Or it may grow into a storm of deliverance, sweeping through the mass of humanity. These things do not matter. For holiness grows in the depths where destinies are shaped, and where the measures with which human vanity is measured are futile and inadequate.

“It is true that you are made of dust, and that you will again turn into dust. But the love that burnt in your heart belongs to eternity, and will go from eternity to eternity. When the star of renewal is kindled again above your spirit, may it then shine with a milder light than did the stars that shone over your journey on earth.

“And you others, who have still to travel on through days and nights—may your journey prove a blessing to yourselves and to others. Those who have struggled have not struggled in vain if their struggle brings freedom for other souls. And those who have reached the light above all darkness have not reached it in vain, if it becomes a light that guides you on your way. Raise your hands and see that you neglect nothing in receiving. And open your hearts that you may scatter the gifts of holiness on all your ways. Go in peace!”

Quietly, and as if bathed in an indescribable purity, the human crowd stirred. The tones that filled the vault seemed to come from heaven and not from the earth. And the silence that from endless space descended on all things when the last human being had disappeared and the last chord died away was unlike any silence I had previously known.

When I found myself outside the temple again, the columns seemed to have grown to an appalling height. I remained standing to gaze at their crests as if I hoped to see with my eyes what no other had yet seen. Then I became aware of the words engraven over the gate:

"Time and purpose cease here! Every moment is an image of eternity, and each thing has a value in itself. Wanderer, you who enter here, filled with the restlessness of time and harassed by its demands, read these words and keep them in your heart."

Inclining my heart in prayer I whispered, "When the hour comes . . . when my body must dissolve and my soul evaporate, may my love be full and ripe. May no thought and no longing prevent death from reaching the final depth. And may no earthly beauty, no heavenly glory, bar the way to renewal in its ascent towards the height of heights."











